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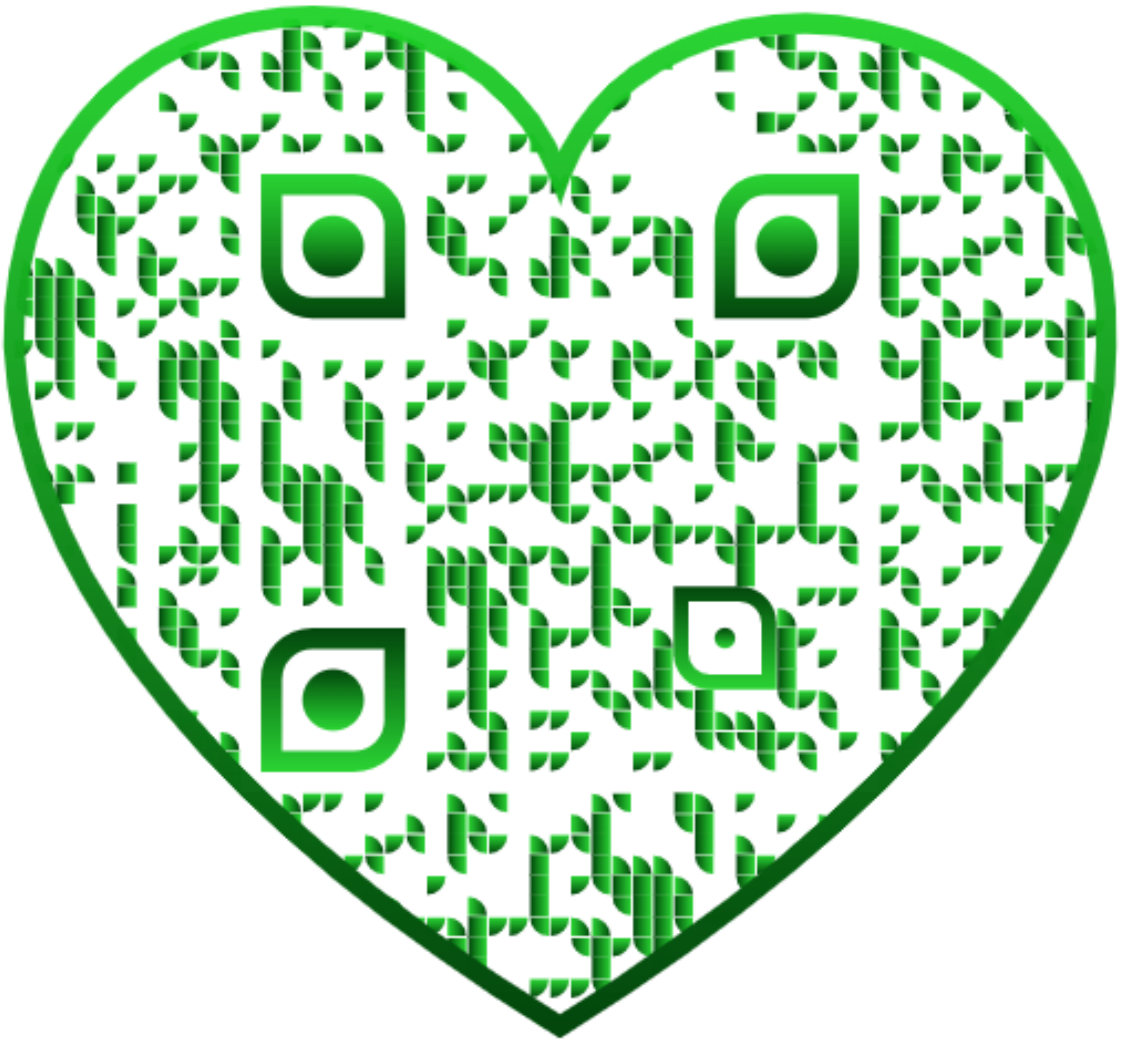

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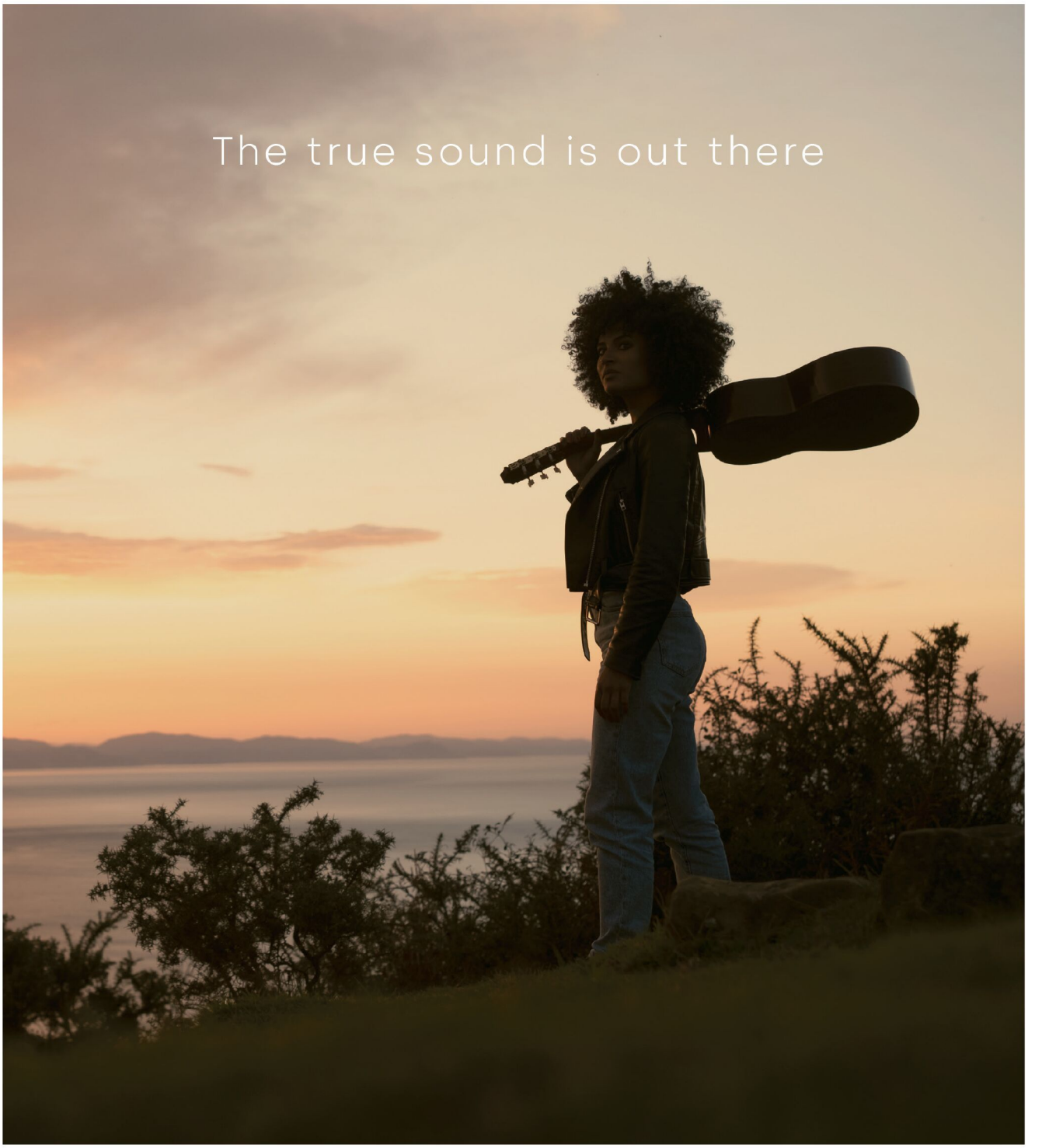

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"It was raw and explosive. Robert Jelinek blew everyone away with his incredible voice and electric performance"

SHINDIG!

welcome

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Listen to our monthly radio show The *Shindig!* Broadcast at sohoradiolondon.com or bit.ly/3HFmcMa

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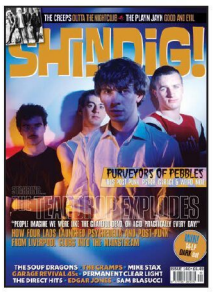

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AUDIO SYSTEMS

Jon 'Mojo' Mills listens to records on the Pro-Ject X2 turntable through the Phono Box DS2. See bit.ly/3FzsvhV and bit.ly/3BFL6rn for information

Hi Shindiggers,

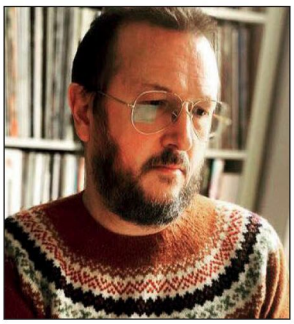
Following on from last issue's "*Nuggets* theme", the garage/psych quotient remains, but this month the focus is on that collection's "children", those "purveyors of *Pebbles*" who formed bands in the post-punk aftermath. The Teardrop Explodes may share more similarities with contemporary bands of their own era than Lyres, but Julian Cope was a psychedelic ambassador, and if you listen closely enough the influence is there, even early on. London's Playn Jayn are re-evaluated, Glasgow's Soup Dragons' formative years are discussed prior to their psychedelic baggy / dance crossover hitting big, and the amazing story of Sweden's The Creeps, from garage revival origins to MTV superstars, is traced. The Direct Hits' *House Of Secrets* album and '80s garage 45s are critiqued, and there's a fascinating 20 Questions with major inspiration for "looking back" Mike Stax. It's mad to think the coverage of this era is now more historical than the '60s were in the '80s. With that in mind, there are also plenty of new releases reviewed, pieces on such rising stars as Sam Blasucci, and one of our favourite new labels, Full Time Hobby. Let's just say, we chronicle the vintage, the old, and brand-new happening acts with equal passion. It's the only way.

Don't forget, there's lots to enjoy online via our website, including links to our radio shows, Qobuz playlists, up to the minute news, unique content, links to our active socials, plus the all-important shop, where you can subscribe and buy back issues.

As we enter the summer, it'd be amazing to know that subscriptions are rising. Please support us.

Kindest Regards,

Jon 'Mojo' Mills,
Editor-In-Chief



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One lucky reader will win 14 Dark records. See page nine.

Our Godley & Creme limited edition vinyl is now in stock. All pre-orders have now been dispatched. We only have a few left now. Head to silverbackpublishing.rocks/product/godley-cremes-lost-60s-recordings-exclusive-vinyl-offer/ to buy now. First come, first served.

New releases: June 2023

Richard Hawley Presents: "Little Bangers"

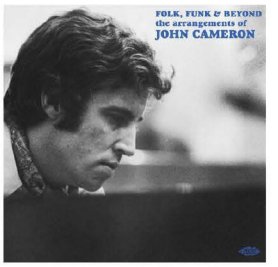
CDCHD 1576 / XXQLP2 075

"I've called this Little Bangers because the tracks are like miniature musical hand grenades. Each recording contains so much energy and yet they're all over in a flash: magnesium lights that explode and fizzle out almost as soon as they've started. That's what I find incredibly beautiful about them." *Richard Hawley*

Candi-Staton
I'm Just A Prisoner

HIQLP 123

With Candi Staton hitting the UK to play the Love Supreme festival over the weekend of 30th June/2nd July, Ace is delighted to reissue her debut LP, which has been out-of-print on vinyl for decades. "I'm Just A Prisoner" was released in 1970 and remains a definitive slice of Southern soul.



Folk, Funk & Beyond
The Arrangements Of John Cameron

CDTOP 1631

John Cameron's arrangements – jazzy woodwind and belting brass – were among the most distinctive and innovative of the 60s and 70s. He played a starring role on hits by Donovan, Hot Chocolate and Heatwave, as well as working on KPM library albums and film scores. Mod dancers, pastoral folk, funky soul - John Cameron mastered the lot.

Lonnie Liston Smith & The Cosmic Echoes
Reflections Of A Golden Dream

HIQLP 106/ CDBGPM 296/ Digital

Released in 1976,"Reflections On A Golden Dream", the follow-up to "Expansions", was his fifth album for Flying Dutchman and featured the core band of the Cosmic Echoes, including his brother Donald Smith, David Hubbard and Wilby Fletcher.

The Clark Sisters
He Gave Me Nothing To Lose

HIQLP 113

The Clark Sisters' fourth album for Westbound's Sound Of Gospel label is the one that pushed them firmly towards the crossover market. It's time to go back to church via the dancefloor.

Junie
Freeze

HIQLP 104

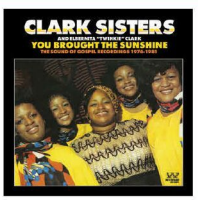
Recorded at the world-famous Ardent Studio in Memphis, "Freeze" saw Junie play every instrument, from a traditional rhythm section to a barrage of the latest synthesizer technology. The result was an avant-funk masterpiece.

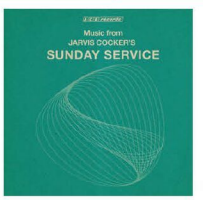
Junie
When We Do

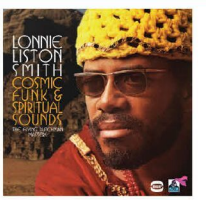
HIQLP 110

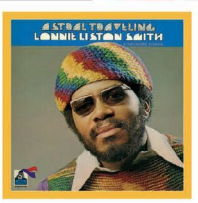
Recorded at the world-famous Ardent Studio in Memphis, "Freeze" saw Junie play every instrument, from a traditional rhythm section to a barrage of the latest synthesizer technology. The result was an avant-funk masterpiece.

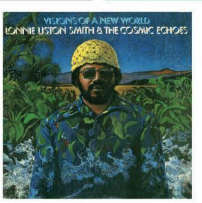
Also available:

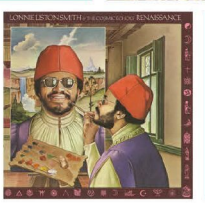


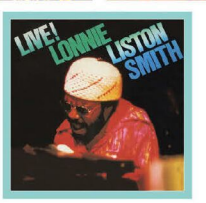












thoughts&words

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STAR LETTER

AN ANTIPODEAN AND PSYCHEDELIC PUNKY REGGAE MASH-UP

Hi Jon,

The Masters Apprentices articles were fab. As a group they covered the whole gamut of the development of rock music from the '60s into the '70s playing beat, R&B, adventurous pop, psychedelia, folk-rock, progressive and hard-rock... but they were ONLY one of many exciting bands and singers that emerged from the antipodean region, like Human Instinct, The La De Das, The Fourmyula, Tamam Shud, Doug Parkinson, and especially Lobby Loyde with his adventurous career, including the awesome Coloured Balls albums and his own solo album *Plays George Guitar*. In truth there are so many that would definitely appeal to a *Shindig!* reader.

Could I suggest that a possible Australian and New Zealand special issue would be worth thinking about? Something similar to the US West Coast issues you've done in the past. It's a whole scene of its own with the more common acts but also the little-known bands and albums all making it an exciting area to forage and write about in your fine zine. I don't know any other publication that would be so left-field to have a special issue covering the '60s and early '70s underground music scene from Australia and New Zealand.

In truth, much of the "underground" music did mirror much of what was happening in the UK, possibly just a bit behind, but there were many studio effect (in particular phasing) laden 45s of psychedelia from both Australia and New Zealand. Many bands also got to record an album or two, and unbelievably a part of this WAS surf, with the likes of Tamam Shud being just one act who contributed to surf movies made in the later '60s into the early '70s.

"Washed up. Tamam Shud, Aussie hippie surfers"

Tully was another. That's another angle that could be of interest.

Another could be the bands who made the trip to the UK from Australia and New Zealand in the '60s and early '70s like The Easybeats, The Fourmyula, Masters Apprentices, Human Instinct etc to find success with recording and playing in England? With The Bee Gees having enormous success, and who you have covered multiple times, others made that trip too without the success. It would be interesting to read of the unsuccessful ones!

Finally (thank goodness, I hear you say) a marvellous feature on Trifle, with the late George Bean. It's an album that fits in with other brass-riddled bands and albums from that time including Walrus, Satisfaction, and both Galliard albums amongst others, of course. So the UK had its own brass-rock phase. Who needed Chicago (Transit Authority), Blood Sweat & Tears and Tower Of Power?

It was interesting to read comments from Dick Cuthell concerning his involvement with Trifle, as I first knew of him from his involvement with The Specials, 2 Tone and ska/reggae success of 1979/80, but others from the psych/prog era also had popped up with involvement with the late '70s early '80s ska/reggae scene, like Bob Lamb from the bands Locomotive and The Dog That Bit People, who produced UB40's *Signing Off* LP. Strangely enough Locomotive released a ska 45 before their psych/prog crossover assault with their terrific album *We Are Everything You See*, so a full circle of sorts for Bob Lamb.

Bob Sargeant, who sadly passed away in 2021, was in Everyone ('71) with Andy Roberts and Mick Abraham's ('71-72) and Al Stewart's bands, produced all three of The (English) Beat albums, plus some Madness.

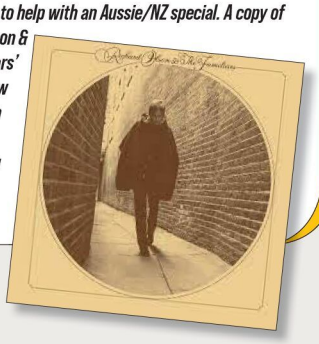
Roger Lomas from The Sorrows, including their time in mainland Europe with the psychedelic album *Old Songs New Songs*, and also Rog & Pip and The Eggy, produced all the Bad Manners albums and 45s on Magnet, and also some of The Selecter with the *Celebrate The Bullet* LP.

So there's some useless information for you all!

Much Love and sunshine,

Stuart Robertson

Whilst this may be the longest Star Letter, there's no discounting the fabulous facts. I am sure Gareth Jones would love to help with an Aussie/NZ special. A copy of Richard Olson & The Familiars' dreamy new album is on the way to reward you for your effort.



SERGEANT ZIPPO

Hi Jon,

In last issue's letters page, you mentioned you were on the trail of a Hookfoot story. Well, it must have been around 1969. (Forgive me as my memory is a bit foggy after all these years.) But one day I bumped into some friends of mine, who told me there were some bands playing at an open day at Goldsmiths college in South London, which I lived close to at the time. I got on a bus and travelled to the college. Sure enough, Hookfoot were playing in one of the classrooms in the afternoon, and were later joined by a young guy who Hookfoot backed while he sang and played the piano. They did a rousing set, with the guy knocking out some honky tonk piano, kicking his legs up like Jerry Lee Lewis. The name of this piano player was Elton John.

Later that day, East Of Eden played in front of a small crowd in the college grounds, followed by King Crimson, who played songs from their upcoming debut album *In The Court Of The Crimson King*, which was amazing. Happy times! The admission was free as well!

Love,

Peter Spong

That sounded like a very memorable day.

MUSIC FOR PLEASURE

Hi Jon,

I live in a village in the South of France, and the moment when *Shindig!* arrives in the mailbox is always a great joy! This magazine is perfection, thank you for everything. Like all the readers who write to you, I propose a new subject: "psychedelic punk".

I recently read that Captain Sensible said that their choice as producer for the second Damned album was Syd, because they were huge fans of *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*. Nick Mason arrived at the studio as "Syd couldn't come".

A part of punk is impregnated with psychedelicism – Wire, Damned, Buzzcocks, Siouxie or Television. And other bands, less punk, from the same era – Soft Boys, TVP's and Swell Maps. We continue to find traces of it in the indie bands of the '80s, from Hüsker Dü (*Zen Arcade*: greatest psychedelic record of the decade) to Jesus & Mary Chain. Another example, Dinosaur Jr's first album ("*Dinosaur*") is a real nugget to rediscover.

Thank you again for everything, each issue is a delight!

Antoine Riguidel

Although not quite the same, the content of this issue looks at how psych and garage informed the '80s. We will cover more of this though. I saw The Damned in May, and they were brilliant. Their site now classifies them as "progressive punk".

Psychedelic punk phase one?

AND IT CAME TO PASS

Hi Jon,

Back in April, 1972, my band of the time, Big Ladder Woman, found themselves on a bill at a local hippy bash, at the Sirius club, North London, alongside Little Free Rock, who were mentioned in the last issue. From what I remember, their roadie wanted to use my Sound City amp as a bass drum anchor. What a bloody cheek... and he was most put out when I told him to make love elsewhere. Also on that bill were Skin Alley, and the truly excellent Warm Dust, with a shy young Paul Carrack on keyboards. At that time, he didn't even sing! From what I can remember, a wonderful time was had by all.

That's it for now.

Bob Sawyer

THIRTY-FOUR YEARS LATER

Hi Jon,

Just thumbing my way through Rudi's *As Times Gone* book and I got a kick from your preface of The Salisbury Arts Centre gig. I was there too and managed to get a song set list and a copy of a review of the gig from the local paper a few days later. From my "Fuzzy" memory I saw The Fuzztones play the night before in London at The Camden Electric Ballroom and drove the following day from London to Salisbury.

I also remember stopping my Cortina somewhere halfway on the A303 and spotted a massive *In Heat* poster erected on the side of a dilapidated building. I tried to remove it, but it was stuck down too tight. I got one eventually in Salisbury town centre at some point. It was a really hot summer and I think I went on to the Reading festival from that point... picking up friends on the way up to it.

Kind regards,

Chris Matthews

That night, a bunch of us like-minds formed a band, The Nuthins, and our future drummer Richie was in pop-punk support band The Stand. I too still have the press cutting. I sincerely think that if I hadn't gone to that gig there'd be no Shindig!.

SAY NO MORE

Hi Jon,

For me Linda Lewis, Joan Armatrading, and Kiki Dee were instrumental in breaking down barriers for other women to move forward making their way in music in the UK. *Lark* and *Fathoms Deep* will always be special LPs by Linda for me, and the singles 'Rock A Doodle Doo' and 'Sideways Shuffle'.

Rest in peace Linda.

Markfaye Southall via Facebook

This was such a shock. It was only a few weeks back that I interviewed Linda. A truly lovely and talented artist who will be much missed.

SHINDIG!

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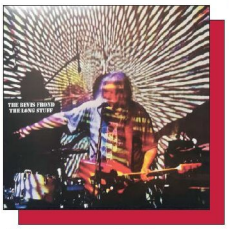
shindiggin'

What's HOT on the Shindig! turntable

The brand new releases, compilation standouts, old album tracks and dusty 45s rockin' our world this month



THE BEVIS FROND
Superseded

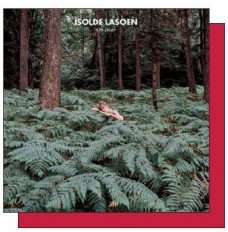
Even for someone who regularly drops 10-, 20-, even 40-minute head-swirlers on his legion of fans, Nick Saloman outdoes himself on this stunning, near-half hour brain fryer recorded live at the intimate Cellar Bar in Cardigan, Wales in 2019. Following an introductory Eastern-flavoured warm-up on his sitar, Saloman and fellow axe wielder Paul Simmons launch into a twin-guitar attack, while long-time bassist Ade Shaw throbs away and Dave Pearce beats the life out of his drumkit. Mayhem ensues, paint peels, windows rattle and ears bleed for another 20 minutes, until you forgot where you were.

Available on: The Long Stuff (BLUE MATTER 2-LP)

LEAH SENIOR
Easy Come, Easy Go

The Melbourne-based artist has released a version of G.W. McLennan's 1991 single as part of a song series to celebrate a new book (*Half Deaf, Completely Mad: The Chaotic Genius Of Australia's Most Legendary Producer* by Tony Cohen with John Olson) about producer-engineer Tony Cohen, who defined Australia's punk and rock sounds in the '70s, '80s and '90s. Leah gives a respectful reading of McLennan's song, its poetic lyrics addressing friendship, love, loss and more. If this finds a place in your heart, you'll be chuffed to know Leah has a new full-length album of original material due in August.

Available on: BANDCAMP



ISOLDE LASOEN
Douce Mélancolie

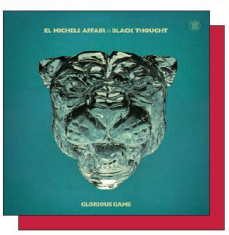
Belgian multi-instrumentalist Isolde Laosen taps into the sound of vintage European pop, library and soundtracks on her wonderful new album *Oh Dear*. 'Douce Mélancolie', a duet with cult French singer Bertrand Burgalat is one of many highlights, recalling the likes of Gainsbourg, Hardy *et al*. The duo's seductive vocals float atop a lush musical backing complete with sweeping orchestral strings, clipped bass and dreamy guitars, all of which creates the perfect pop soundscape in which to lose yourself.

Available on: Oh Dear (MAY WAY LP)

THE ORCHIDS
I Never Thought I Was Clever

So many great Scottish bands could easily win the best kept secret award but surely The Orchids take away first prize. Even the most ardent indie fan could be forgiven for thinking they were a figment of the imagination, such is their apparent anonymity since forming in 1989. Yet their most recent LP is as wondrous as anything they've ever done. This understated indie-pop gem is typical of the dreamily melodic, melancholic prowess that continues to set them apart from other Sarah Records acts.

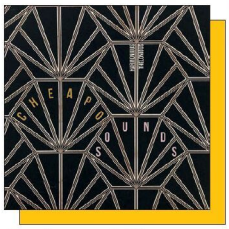
Available on: Dreaming Kind (SKEP WAX LP)



EL MICHELS AFFAIR & BLACK THOUGHT
I'm Still Somehow

They admired each other's work for years. Then, when the pandemic hit, lead Roots MC Black Thought reached out to El Michels Affair's Leon Michels asking if he could send him new sounds to write to. Michels experimented with a different approach, recording music with live instrumentation, then sampling himself. The result is a collaborative record that sits nicely with *Cheat Codes* (Black Thought's masterful project with Danger Mouse from last year) while making the best of Michels' gift for literate, retrodelic soul grooves. 'I'm Still Somehow' is the instant stand-out of an exquisite tracklist.

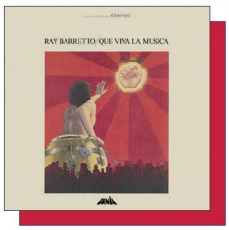
Available on: Glorious Game (BIG CROWN LP)



HARMONIUS THELONIUS
Soft Opening Machine

Included on the recent *Cheapo Sounds* album this is Stefan Schwander under the moniker of Harmonius Thelonius. 'Soft Opening Machine' is a bright, ping-ponging affair. Recently issued as a single, it takes the Pan-African, South American and Middle Eastern rhythms for which the Düsseldorf based technician has become known, combining with minimalist electronics to produce a perfect encapsulation of simplistic krautrock-meets-deep disco sounds. Often operated from a keyboard called The Monomachine, this calls to mind the primitive origins of electronic noise making. Disposable and great.

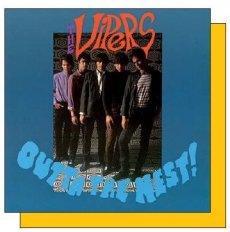
Available on: Cheapo Sounds (BUREAU B CD)



RAY BARRETTO
Cocinando

Cocinado translates as "cooking" and that's exactly what the mighty Ray Barretto and his crack Orchestra do on this hypnotic and masterfully executed 10-minute studio jam. Built around a funkily vamping organ riff, vocal chants and contrasting timbale, conga and bongo rhythms, the track leisurely unravels deep in the pocket as a tailor-made showcase for the beating heart of Barretto's Orchestra. Spicy yet cool at the same time, the spectacular yet tastefully despatched descarga is the primary focus of the cut. As vintage early '70s NY salsa grooves go, this one smoulders seductively on a low flame.

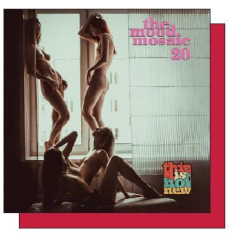
Available on: Que Viva La Musica (FANIA/CRAFT LATINO LP)



THE VIPERS
Nothing's From Today

If The Fuzztones were The Music Machine, fellow NYC band The Vipers were The Monkees. Or perhaps The Turtles. 'Nothing's From Today', the opening track on their 1984 debut, does bear more than a passing resemblance to The Turtles' '66 gem 'Outside Chance' in its 12-string riff and high harmonies. If it had been released in '66 this would surely have been in the running for inclusion on *Nuggets*. As it was, when it came to the '80s garage revival, no one could match The Vipers' professional pop smarts.

Available on: Outta The Nest! (TEEN SOUND LP)



ESTELLE LEVITT
All I Dream

New Yorker Levitt is predominantly remembered as a writer, with dozens of credits for artists including Herman's Hermits, Sons Of Champlin, Chad & Jeremy and Lulu. Her career as a performer began in 1968 with this low-key outing for MGM's Music Factory imprint. It's beautifully understated woozy psych-folk that rides on a slow groove as strings swell and Levitt's nonchalant vocal inhabits a place somewhere between Nancy Sinatra and Bonnie Dobson. Much-compiled, the original 45 is becoming scarce, and for good reason.

Available on: The Mood Mosaic 20: This Is Hot New (MOOD MOSAIC 2-LP)

THE DIRECT HITS
She Really Didn't Care

Sandwiched between their two albums, and self-funded from recording to artwork to manufacture, this 1985 single found The Direct Hits (see this issue's Family Album) in full-on kitchen sink drama mode. Our protagonist's day is enlivened by the "girl at the bus stop in the rain", only for the tone to turn to one of rueful reflection as he "starts to reminisce" and realises "she really didn't care". It's The Hollies' 'Bus Stop' recast as a '67 Who pop-art melodrama. Flip it over and you'll find the equally effective 'Christopher Cooper!', curiously omitted from Cherry Red's 2014 career overview.

Available on: Here, There Or Anywhere: 23 Mod Pop Classics 1982-1986 (CHERRY RED CD)

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Doing it right. Permanent Clear Light. L-R: Arto Kakko, Markku Helin, Matti Laitinen

Psychedelic Rainbows

SARAH GREGORY ventures into the luminous world of Finnish psychedelia with **PERMANENT CLEAR LIGHT**

Finland is a treasure trove when it comes to underground music – be it experimental, dance, heavy-rock or in the case of Permanent Clear Light (or PCL), psych. First appearing on the scene over a decade ago, the trio were heralded as "Finland's top psychedelic band" and they haven't really looked back, proudly flying the flag with their enthralling brand of prog-influenced psychedelia. While remaining loyal to their psych roots, the band's sound has become progressively more pacific over time – the heavier prog leanings giving way to a more pop-oriented, pastoral aesthetic. This change is none more evident than on their third and latest album *Right As Rain* which finds PCL looking towards the beloved Canterbury scene for inspiration.

Friends of old, the trio of PCL were drawn together by a love of '60s psychedelic music and '70s Finnish prog (a whole fascinating mini-genre in itself that includes Wigwam and Finnforest). "[We] used to play in the same bands when we were teenagers," says Markku Helin, the band's lead guitarist and synth specialist. "I was interested in psychedelia since I first heard 'See Emily

Play', and some 10 years ago we started PCL, just for recording some psychedelic sounds."

Alongside Helin, the band features multi-instrumentalist Arto Kakko on drums, bass, keys and guitar (and in the earlier days, violin); and Matti Laitinen on vocals. PCL are true psych believers. Such a devotee of the lysergic gods is Helin that he even adapts his listening according to season. "On dark winter nights I like to play late '60s/early '70s prog, such as Van der Graaf Generator, Can and early King Crimson. Now I have switched to my summer mode, which often includes British folk-rock – *On The Shore* by Trees is my desert island disc." This is unquestionably obvious for anyone who has listened to their earlier albums, which see the band flip flop between heavy-prog and wistful folk (and everything in between) – their desire to return to the source preserving the authenticity of their sound.

Making the most of the luxury of fully equipped home studios, PCL released their debut album *Beyond These Things* in 2013. Initially CD-only, courtesy of Finnish indie label Havasupai Records, two years later it was given a special vinyl-only release by GOD Records. And the album marked the ultimate introduction to what PCL are all about. Prog notes intersperse with early Floyd electronica, Indian instrumentation, bucolic '60s psychedelia and British whimsy, folk, jazz and some great melodic harmonisation. Auspicious beginnings, but it was seven years before a follow-up was to emerge.

As a trio, they were not averse to going off and doing their own thing for a bit, but PCL was always bubbling away in the background. Throughout their lifetime they have also been closely aligned with renowned British psych label Fruits de Mer – the label responsible for putting out an early version of 'Higher Than The Sun', which features on the debut – and theirs became a symbiotic relationship with PCL habitually contributing to Fruits de Mer's dazzling psych compilation albums.

When their sophomore album *Cosmic Comics* was finally released in 2020, it bore all the classic psych hallmarks while marking a distinct shift towards space-rock and synth experimentation. Hawkwind meets Klaus Schulze with a splash of Soft Machine. Nothing seemingly off the table. It's a point of interest that Helin says that modern-day psych doesn't really figure for him. "I don't listen to much new music, but I do love Temples." But it is apparent that the ethereal, drone-led take of latter-day psych may have seeped into *Cosmic Comics* – a notable contemporary feel in places not least the 10-minute epics which are undeniably more Ozric Tentacles than Strawberry Alarm Clock.

Thankfully, the band were much quicker in getting their latest album out. "We recorded the new LP very quickly, starting from scratch – it practically recorded itself," says Helin. "But the release was delayed quite a while because of the current vinyl boom." And *Right As Rain* marks a sea change for PCL. Where *Cosmic Comics* leant into the experimental, their latest offering finds the band embracing a more languorous, pop-based sound – one that's inherently more rounded and accomplished than previous efforts. Never completely forsaking their psychedelic inclinations, PCL seem pleasantly comfortable in this new, lightweight skin. "Arto and Matti wrote most of the songs on the new album, and they just happened to be in a pop mode, with pretty stellar results, I think," says Helin of his bandmates. "My focus was on the more experimental parts. There are also several tracks flirting with the *avant-garde*, which I like to call *avant*-pop. And the album closes with a proggy 10-minute 'pocket symphony'."

"On dark winter nights I like to listen to late '60s/ early '70s prog, such as Van der Graaf Generator, Can, and the early King Crimson. Now I have switched to my summer mode – *On The Shore* by Trees is my desert island disc"

Helin is on the money there. 'Iron Gate' shows that PCL have not left those roots behind, which should please those fans that have been with them since the start, but the heavier elements have most certainly been left behind. This is a much more delicate record, taking their previous bucolic tendencies and bringing them to the fore. It's 1969 in the best way possible. Lush vocals, mix with subtle instrumentation – there's only the occasional invasion from an electric guitar; even the synth is dialled down here.

Given the velvety musical orientation of *Right As Rain*, it's hardly surprising to find that it was made in the most idyllic of circumstances. "We do most of our recording at my summer cottage in the middle of absolutely nowhere." And they don't rely on anyone else either – having become perfectly self-sufficient. We record everything digitally, direct to the console – so it is all very compact and mobile. Just a laptop, drum set, a couple of guitar amps plus a ton of effects pedals."

With *Right As Rain* released on German psych/space-rock label Sulatron, the band have no doubt created a psych-pop classic that sits delightfully alongside their previous exploits. PCL really are a band that people should be paying attention to – the music is rich and rewarding and with each listen there's more to enjoy. But don't expect to see Permanent Clear Light any time live soon. "We don't have any plans for the future right now. We have never played a gig and never will – I hate gigging!!"

Right As Rain is out now on Sulatron

Seventh Dimension

Former Stairs frontman, bandleader, and sideman to a coterie of admirers including Paul Weller, Ian McCulloch and Saint Etienne, **EDGAR JONES** has carved out a singular niche as a dynamic musical force across 30 years of visceral, soulful releases.

As his seventh solo outing *Reflections Of A Soul Dimension* races out of the traps, Jones guides us through some of the sounds that fed into its creation.

"Before we get into the tunes that were influential to the record," he tells *Shindig!*, "it's probably worth mentioning that I was going through a phase of absolutely no disposable income whatsoever, and worse, due to my age and heavy musical dispositions, my tastes had become somewhat expensive too. I couldn't afford to buy any of the music I was digging so had to write my own in a similar vein"

TONY MIDDLETON
Paris Blues
(B-side, Mala, 1966)

When I discovered this marvel of a record about five years ago, it was a bit of an "uh, duh" moment, in that it made me realise a sub-genre I'd not put my finger on before. Some might call it "big city soul" or wannabe Bacharach types recording rather expensively in big New York and LA studios with tasteful, though largish orchestration. Many obscurities like this have been given a second lease of life through the northern soul scene. I love the instrumental bridge – makes me feel like I've died and gone to heaven. Tony Middleton's voice has a power seldom equalled here – I'm almost scared to sing along some days. And Klaus Ogerman is an arrangement/production genius, full stop. It's a real shame the two singles they made together flopped, and no LP ensued.

ANTHONY & THE IMPERIALS
Payin' Our Dues
(Veep LP, 1966)

Fortunately the early releases of Little Anthony and Teddy Randazzo weren't flops (stateside, anyway) and some fantastic long-players were made. This one at the height of their powers in 1966, to my ears being the fullest and finest artistic-wise (I believe the two previous sold better). A really strong collection of songs, with four singles released by The Imperials and three others recorded as singles by other artists from the Teddy Randazzo production fold. One trait I love in this uptown, lush production type of northern soul is that thing when the arrangement syncopates with the vocals creating big crescendo effects – vocal goes "Never Again", arrangement goes DA, DA, DA, DAAA – you get me? This LP is a masterclass in that. And yep, there's a fair bit of it on *Reflections Of A Soul Dimension*.

DIONNE WARWICK
This Empty Place
(A-side, Scepter, 1963)

I just love this off-kilter Dionne Warwick record, obviously a big influence on certain outro in a Love classic ('The Red Telephone'). I love odd chord use – you know the stuff that makes you feel a bit sick in the belly, a bit too rich, like the finest cuisine. A really popular number with groups and singers in the early '60s with many covers. Even The Swinging Blue Jeans did it FFS!

LUTHER INGRAM
If It's All The Same To You Babe
(A-side, Hib, 1966)

I've known this tune for years, but it's such a big melting pot of ideas, I know it'll influence me again and again in years to come. One of the finest records to come out of the mid-60s Detroit scene.

Sorry, I have to talk about chords again. The four minor chord run in the verse and chorus is so unusual yet so encapsulating. I did actually use the equivalent four chords on a track on my LP but ordered them 1,2,1,2,1,2,3,4, as opposed to 1,2,3,4 here. See if y'all can spot the track when it's released. I also paid tribute to the whispered backing vocals on another track on the LP.

HOLIDAYS
Love's Creeping Up On Me
(A-side, Revilot, 1967)

I love this Revilot label. Detroit monster. Again, the chords in the verse that make you feel a bit sick in the belly. The flipside of Detroit northern staple 'Never Alone'. This side though was never accepted by the northern scene, probably cos you can't do that silly dance with the burmos to it. Goes down a treat on early funk dancefloors though.

THE SUPERIORS
What Would I Do
(A-side, Verve, 1965)

Much as I love soul music for its energy, vibe and general deliciousness (who with a beating heart doesn't?), I have to admit as a writer of music I'm always looking out for something new on the chord progression front (not always prevalent in soul and R&B in general), like this number here. The harmonies in the chorus and call and reply in the verse really make it cook too.

THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL
Darling Be Home Soon
(A-side, Kama Sutra, 1967)

It's been on my musical bucket list for so long to do a song with a trumpet/flugelhorn taking the third verse. This, being one of the best, gets on the list here, despite its lack of obscurity.

CAJUN HEART
Got To Find A Way
(A-side, Warner Bros, 1969)

I came across this number – to my ears probably a late Wrecking Crew production (I'd cite its sonic similarities to Glen Campbell's version of 'Oh Happy Day' as my

"Tony Middleton's voice has a power seldom equalled here – I'm almost scared to sing along some days"

witness) – just after we'd worked on the single 'Torture'. We were patting ourselves on the back after recording 'Torture' but tunes like this let us know there's still work to be done on the largesse front. A masterclass in making it sound easy. Immaculate bass guitar sound too.

BILLY PROPHET

What Can I Do?

(A-side, Sue, 1965)

Steve Parry passed me a link to this during the making of the LP. I'll admit I didn't click for a day or two as I'd mixed it up title-wise with the George Kirby mid-tempo number on Chess, also great. But I was real glad when I did, as this is one of those tracks that has all the happiness and goodtime feel of a Tamla track, but with a lovely rawness to the sound you don't get with Tamla after, say, 1964. Despite all the smart-arsed big northern sounds I've talked about, sometimes it's nice just to hear a nice, catchy, feelgood track like this. I think it maybe had some influence on Steve's approach to arranging our opening track 'Place My Bets.' My contrapuntal bass line disguises this a bit, but I reckon that's the case.

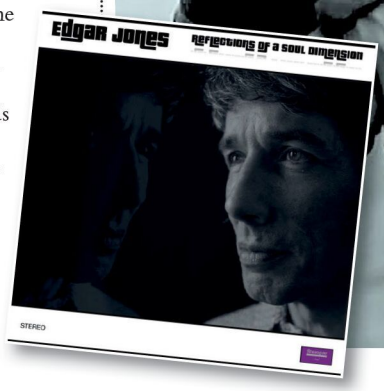
JULIE DRISCOLL

I Know You Love Me Not

(A-side, Parlophone, 1967)

Thought for the last in list I'd throw in something British, as we definitely didn't overlook some fantastic sounds made over here by the likes of Reg Guest, Keith Mansfield etc, and it very much shows in a few of our tracks. Also, it's nice to tip the hat to *Shindig!* with at least one piece of light Brit psych.

This one finds Reg at his most Reg Guest-iness, throwing all but the kitchen sink at this arrangement – Theremins, the works. Seeing Reg's name on a record always piques my interest. Penned by the smashing lads from Blossom Toes, whose LP *We Are Ever So Clean* Reg also arranged. Again, I've known this tune for years, but its influence is still felt on the record. As are so many that haven't made this list.



Reflections Of A Soul Dimension is out now on Steropar

Jonesing for some '60s soul. Edgar comes of age

Circle Skies

Mapache's **SAM BLASUCCI** embraces the piano for debut solo album Off My Stars.

CLIVE WEBB hears about departed friends, new instruments and pizzelles

"I found myself with a stack of songs, all of which felt so different compared to the things I had up until that point," reflects Sam Blasucci on the circumstances that led to his debut solo outing. "It's just one of those things that was not necessarily premeditated but, in the moment, felt right."

This may be the first time that his own name has appeared on the front cover of a record but Blasucci will be familiar to readers of *Shindig!* as one half of Mapache. He and Clay Finch have released four albums of cosmic, sun-kissed Americana characterised by warm harmonies and interwoven guitars.

While the new record captures some of that familiar sound it also sees Blasucci heading into new sonic territory. His principal collaborator was producer and multi-instrumentalist Johnny Payne. Much of the material was also written not on guitar but an old piano acquired from Finch's mother. "Playing piano was like starting from scratch for me," attests the singer-songwriter. "I don't really know how to play it in any technical sense, so that brought me to this sort of infantile state with it."

"I found myself with a stack of songs, all of which felt so different compared to the things I had up until that point"

Lyrically though the album pursues adult themes. The material reflects the fact it was written over a number of years, a time of personal change and transition to new maturity. "I guess the feeling of change and death and rebirth is tied into that," considers Blasucci.

Some of that can be seen in the video to the first single from the album, the tender 'Turn Yourself Around', in which hands reach out to Alfred, the widowed husband of Blassuci's late friend Roman. Lest that seem too solemn, listen to the languid groove of follow-up release 'Sha La La' with its summery saxophone and sing-along chorus. Blasucci affirms that it is also for the listener to interpret the meanings of his songs. "I don't know, in some ways once the songs are born, they're really none of my business after that."

The remaining 10 tracks on the album include a trio of cover versions. Among them are spare and sincere acoustic readings of Dido's 'Thank You' and The Cranberries' 'Linger'. Most intriguing of all is Blasucci's take on Jimmy Fontana's 'Il Mondo', which he dedicates to his grandmother Lucille. "That one comes from years of pasta fazool and pizzelles at her house." Cranberries and pasta? West Coast Americana never tasted so good.

Off My Stars is out now on Innovative Leisure

Sam Blasucci. A stellar talent
PHOTO: LAURA-LYNN PETRICK

Frondest regards from Paul Simmons, Dave Pearce, Nick Saloman and Louis Wiggett

Seaside Special

Brit-psych legends **THE BEVIS FROND** have convened on the south coast to lay down tracks for a new album.

Bandleader Nick Saloman shares exclusive insights with **DUNCAN FLETCHER**

Good things are happening at Graffite Studios in Bexhill-on-Sea. It's 37 years since the debut Frond album but guitarist/vocalist/songwriter Nick Saloman clearly has no plans to slow down. Prior to entering the studio he'd stockpiled around 100 acoustic demos for the band to whittle down. "We've just done 21 backing tracks in 10 hours," he tells *Shindig!*. Working with Nick are Paul Simmons (guitar), Dave Pearce (drums) and Louis Wiggett (Bronco Bullfrog/Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovell) on bass, who's standing in for long-time member Ade Shaw.

Frond fans will be pleased to know there's a continuity of sound from the band's previous records. "It's the same old gear," says Nick. "I play a 1976 Burns Flyte guitar, a Fender acoustic and an old '60s Baldwin Burns 12-string. I have a few old keyboards, a nice Vox Continental organ and a Wurlitzer electric piano. I put most of it through a '70s Carlsboro Stingray amp."

Nick recently turned 70 and still has plenty of things to say via his songs. "I try to make it sound like it's believable for a guy my age, there are a few songs about getting old and death, but then there are others that are quite fun. I wrote one about a guy taking his granddaughter to McDonald's, which made my wife laugh. If I had to pin a theme on the album, I'd say it's loosely about the human condition, but that sounds rather poncey doesn't it?"

The early Bevis Frond recordings were made using a 4-track cassette recorder but it's pro studios all the way for Nick these days. "I guess I was an unwitting pioneer of lo-fi," says Nick. "The early albums were recorded on a 4-track because I had no money to go into a proper studio. Using a professional studio is a much better option, though I guess it loses some of the ramshackle charm of the Porta One days."

Shindig! asks Nick what his secret is to staying creative. "No secret really. I just love writing songs and playing guitar, and while it still sounds okay, I'll continue to put stuff out. I think I'll know if it starts sounding crap. Having said that, I love football, and being crap hasn't stopped me playing yet! Despite my years, I don't think I've got any worse, and that's good enough for me. I'll keep doing this until my adoring devotees get fed up with my ramblings, or I think it's not much good anymore. Hopefully neither thing will happen for a while."

"I'll keep doing this until my adoring devotees get fed up with my ramblings, or I think it's not much good anymore. Hopefully neither thing will happen for a while"

The new album is expected later this year

Calibro 35 offer "a good mash-up"
PHOTO: CHIARA MIRELLI

Extraordinary Adventures

Modern-day maestros **CALIBRO 35** return with an incredible new record channelling... Gong?

PAUL OSBORNE gets swept away

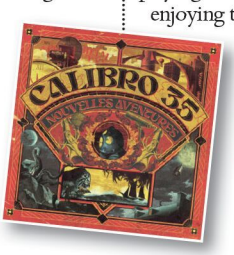
It's been three years since Calibro 35's last album of original material, *Momentum*, but far from resting on their laurels, the Italian multi-instrumentalists have been working hard on several projects. "Recent years have been quite intense for Calibro 35," explains Tommaso Colliva. "We were asked to do a few soundtracks including a 12-episode TV series *Blanca*, and we embarked on an anthological Morricone project (called *Scacco al Maestro*) that turned out to be more challenging than we anticipated at the beginning."

This busy creative schedule lit the creative fire in them for new "Calibro Music", and the result is new studio album *Nouvelles Aventures*, arguably their best to date. "What we wanted to do with this album was make music that describes who we are now," says Colliva, "incorporating bits from all directions and sum them up in the Calibro way that we've developed through the years."

Recorded in Naples in just five days ("to maintain that urgency we learnt from old school soundtracks and library albums"), *Nouvelles Aventures* sees Colliva, Massimo Martellotta, Enrico Gabrielli and Fabio Rondanini at the absolute top of their game, running the gauntlet of genres from the heavy "crime funk" of their early career through jazz, prog and cinematic grooves to the more contemporary funk sounds of recent outings. It's a sound born out of a mixture of compositional skill and the shared chemistry that allows them to explore all ideas, as Martellotta explains. "We allocate studio time for improvising and most of the time we come out with very fresh stuff we would not be able to think of otherwise, it's a nice trip every time."

It's a mammoth achievement exemplified by lead single 'Extraordinaire', a widescreen mash up of Schifrin and Morricone-esque sounds, groovy '70s prog and epic orchestral flourishes that highlights what makes these modern-day maestros such a formidable proposition, both in the studio and on the stage. "Our main inspiration for 'Extraordinaire' was 'Master Builder' from the incredible Gong album *You*," Enrico Gabrielli explains. "Daevid Allen and his friends may seem quite far from the cinematic crime music we started with but that's what we tried to do: a good mash-up mixing French and British psychedelia with obscure Morricone arrangement tricks."

Their return to the live arena post-pandemic gives us all a welcome chance to experience their live power. "It's great to be back," enthuses Martellotta, "we missed playing live a lot and seeing smiling faces enjoying the show. We feel so lucky to do this again in front of a real audience."



Nouvelles Aventures is out on 30th June on Record Kicks/ Virgin Music Italy

happening right now

A Splash Of Colour

Brand new Midlands band **THE CRYSTAL TEARDROP** bring serious respite for those seeking girl/boy Californian sunshine

The individual members of The Crystal Teardrop have all gigged extensively over the past few years and have come together to play the music they love. Alexandra Rose (Disques Vérité, 23rd Tangent) and Stuart Gray (Biff Bang Pow) both regularly DJ '60s rare cuts which inform and inspire the group's sound while Leon Jones' previous kaleidoscopic exploits with Alfa 9 add an extra dimension to the shimmering jangling dynamic. Completing the line-up are vintage clothes designer Caitlin Hare (The Octopus Garden) and multi-instrumentalist Connor Wells (Formal Speedwear).

The band formed in autumn 2022. "Leon and I met up at last year's Le Beat Bespoke Festival in London and discovered we lived less than a mile away from each other and shared a passion for all things '60s," explains Alexandra. "Leon had previously worked with Stuart and it didn't take long for us to decide that we wanted to form a band that showcased our love for mid to late '60s psychedelia and garage-rock. Soon afterwards Caitlin agreed to join on bass and Connor became our drummer. We all share a deep affinity for classic artists including The Beatles and The Kinks as well as West Coast favourites such as The Great Society, Love and The Byrds. We are collectively inspired by the *Nuggets* and *Pebbles* series and have a particular affection for The Paisley Underground artists like Rain Parade, The Bangs and The Three O'Clock."

Their debut at Le Beat Bespoke Festival in London over Easter weekend in April turned many heads. Further gigs are lined up in the Midlands and London over the next few months.

"We want to bring a bit of colour to the world and make great memories while we are doing it!" says Alex with a huge grin across her face.

As told to Jon 'Mojo' Mills

CARGO COLLECTIVE

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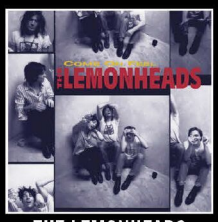

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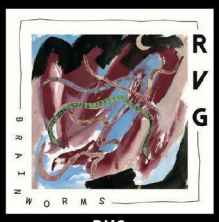
Expanded 30th anniversary re-issue of The Lemonheads' classic 1993 album. The breakthrough record that took American alt rock global & catapulted Evan Dando into the hearts of a generation. With a wealth of unreleased demos, alternative versions & rarities.



RVG
BRAIN WORMS
FIRE RECORDS LP / CD
A pivotal record for contemporary times; bright, free, adamant, optimistic. RVG's fullest, most pristine album yet. RVG have made a record they can, by all accounts, call their best. "A calling card for outsiders... dynamic & vital post-punk" The Guardian

DECISIVE PINK
(KATE NV + ANGEL DERADOORIAN)
TICKET TO FAME
FIRE RECORDS LP / CD
Their debut calls on NV's experimental pop leanings & Deradoorian's taste for atmosphere & otherworldliness, this is electronic pop at it's finest. "Substantive & thoroughly hypnotic" NY Times.

CURRENT AFFAIRS
OFF THE TONGUE
TOUGH LOVE LP / CD
Debut LP from Glasgow/Berlin 4 piece Current Affairs, written from within the world of crumbling services, broken bonds & wounded spirits, Off the Tongue rolls off an ecstatic rage, filled with hope for you, them & everyone else.

THEY WATCH US FROM THE MOON
CHRONICLE: ACT 1, THE ASCENSION
NEW HEAVY SOUNDS LP / CD
Cosmic space metal, with riffs as heavy as Osmium, melodic lead guitar and sublime soaring twin female vocals. A unique proposition in any genre.

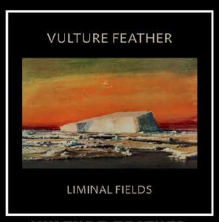
TANLINES
THE BIG MESS
MERGE RECORDS LP / CD
Tanlines share their most intimate and personal work yet on. The Big Mess pivots from the band's synth-pop origins to a more organic, guitar-driven songwriting approach.

LIGHTNING DUST
NOSTALGIA KILLER
WESTERN VINYL LP / CD
Sticky with unresolved, living feelings, on Nostalgia Killer Lightning Dust's Amber Webber sings of romantic warfare channeling Stevie Nicks, while echoing the spirits of Grace Slick and Beth Gibbons.

RITUAL HOWLS
VIRTUE FALTERS
FELTE LP / CD
The Detroit trio's fifth album is a cinematic blend of twangy industrial rock, metal, noise, baritone vocals, and macabre lyrics. It's their most urgent, focused album to date.

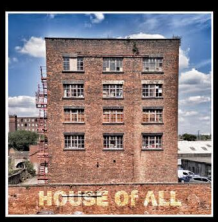
ROXY GORDON
CRAZY HORSE NEVER DIED
PARADISE OF BACHELORS LP / CD
The first reissue of the 1988 album by Choctaw, Assiniboine, and Texan poet, activist, and musician Roxy Gordon (First Coyote Boy) (1945–2000), acclaimed by Townes Van Zandt and Leonard Cohen.

BEACH FOSSILS
BUNNY
BAYONET RECORDS LP / CD
Earning their stature as one of the most definitive and enduring bands of the last decade, 'Bunny' is Beach Fossils' most vivid, grounded and personal work to date.



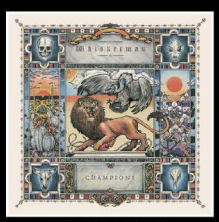
VULTURE FEATHER
LIMINAL FIELDS
FELTE LP / CD
The debut album from ex-members of Wilderness is post/pre/future/art punk – amorphous vessels encapsulating the dream-like, liminal fields that all beings are passing through from one moment to the next.

NICHOLAS ALLBROOK
MANGANESE
SPINNING TOP RECORDS LP
Emotional, geological, psycho-geographical: this is the terrain of Manganese, Allbrook's fourth album away from life as front person and co-founder of Pond. A psyche-pop wonderland that hums with life.

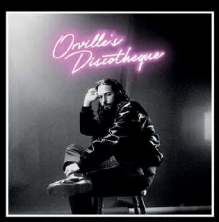


HOUSE OF ALL
HOUSE OF ALL
TINY GLOBAL PRODUCTIONS LP / CD
Ex-Fall members. "HOUSE Of ALL has a unique energy, each member playing sharply around motorik grooves against Bramah's mystical lyrics without a hint of compromise."

LAUREN HELENE GREEN
OUTER HIGHWAY REALMS
ROYAL OAKIE CD
Outer Highway Realms is the debut instrumental album from Lauren Helene Green (Tan Cologne), collecting observations on New Mexico's slow desert – echoes of time & space, morning reflections, & sunset drives.



WHISKERMAN
CHAMPIONS (DELUXE EDITION)
ROYAL OAKIE CD
Originally released in 2016, Champions has become a fan favourite, widely regarded as Whiskerman's finest work. The new Deluxe Edition features 3 unreleased bonus tracks from the original album sessions.



JEREMY TUPLIN
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A full on, unashamed concept album! Packed with dark, twisted indie electro hits. "Tuplin belongs in the lineage of arch dramatists like Tindersticks and The National" Uncut. "Bill Callahan on 'shrooms" LOBF.

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Impermance

ELVIS THIRLWELL discovers how **THE SAXOPHONES'** otherwise smooth and lounge sounding *To Be A Cloud* album in fact questions our very existence

For the Saxophones – AKA husband and wife Alexi Erenkov and Alison Alderdice – music is a matter of life and death: "I still live in fear of the void," Erenkov candidly admits. "Many of my songs dance between these poles of acceptance of death and fear of the unknown "

While the warm, muted tones drifting through the Northern Californian duo's third album *To Be A Cloud* move with a sensuous, velvety meditation, soaking up its lilting, smooth-jazz pulsations feels like floating backwards downstream on a raft made of roses. The whole gorgeous creation sounds like late '60s Scott Walker caught in a really good mood (rather than one of his existential ones). Yes, The Saxophones are busy, grappling with the vicissitudes of life, and the ephemerality of existence.

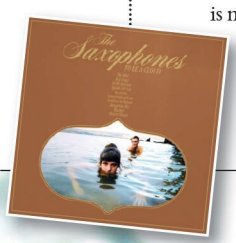
Underpinning the album are the Western Zen Buddhist teachings of Vietnamese monastic Thich Nhat Hanh. When he passed away in 2022, his book *No Death, No Fear* landed in Erenkov's lap. The title of *To Be A Cloud* derives from theories that life and death do not exist, and that people are transient, like a cloud changes to rain and back.

"I love this concept and teaching," Erenkov notes. "It validates something always in the back of my mind: the evanescence of all things. While I find it confirming to Hanh's writing, it also brings up a point that I have difficulty with. That is, accepting impermanence!" Indeed, some of Erenkov's lyrics see him question these very notions – "I don't want to me a cloud / It bored me then and it will bore me again" – he sings on 'In My Defence'.

And there's also that other context integral to The Saxophones' philosophy: parenthood. Having moved four times and had two kids in six years, it makes sense the music has come to embody the liminal spaces it was largely conceived in. "I wrote in my car during breaks from work, or in the dining room after the kids are asleep," says Erenkov.

"I'm also more aware of impermanence than I ever have been," he concludes. "Having a child and watching them grow more vigorous just as you begin to decline really magnifies the cyclical nature of life and the necessity of transformation. Thich Nhat Hanh says, 'The lotus flower cannot be there without the mud. Without the mud, a lotus is not possible. There is no happiness without suffering. There is no life without death.'"

"Having a child and watching them grow more vigorous just as you begin to decline really magnifies the cyclical nature of life and the necessity of transformation"



To Be A Cloud is out now on Full Time Hobby

The nebulous Alison and Alexi

hear & now

PAUL MOODY of London's self-styled "Mod Gods" Studio 68! shares his current fave raves

LISTENING (OLD)

I've currently got Vivian Stanshall's solo debut *Men Opening Umbrellas Ahead* on repeat. A cathartic – and darkly hilarious – howl of despair at a dreary world, it's also seriously funky, an all-star cast including Traffic's Steve Winwood, Jim Capaldi and percussionist Reebop Kwaku Baah fusing African rhythms on songs satirising everything from hypocritical pop stars to his own sex life. Who else could write a lyric like 'Bout Of Sobriety"s: "I'd like to settle down, but first I gotta settle up / With the understanding man in the embalming-fluid shop"?

LISTENING (NEW)

Buzzard Buzzard Buzzard's *Backhand Deals*. They look great – as if they've just come from the set of *Cheggers Plays Pop* – and the lyrics are funny and relevant; I love the way 'Good Day' has a dig at the gentrification of rock. Musically, there are nods to everyone from The Nazz and Badfinger to Mud. The cat crept in...

READING

Imagine *Point Break* crossed with *Easy Rider*. That's the vibe of Nicholas Schou's *Orange Sunshine* – the real-life tale of a group of Californian surfers in the late '60s who built up a global drugs cartel by smuggling hashish in surfboards. They even manufactured their own super-strength acid in a bid to "turn on" the world. Timothy Leary was a fan and Hendrix hung out with them. I was born too late.

WATCHING

I'm always returning to *The Final Programme* (1973, Robert Fuest). It's full of great one-liners and dazzling set-pieces and I love Jon Finch as super-suave secret agent Jerry Cornelius – immaculate in a suit designed by Ossie Clark and made by Tommy Nutter. Michael Moorcock's novel was also first published in '68, which helps. It's a very tasty world.

As told to Andy Morten

Studio 68!'s Back With The Boys EP is out now on Detour

BART DAVENPORT

GAME PRESERVE

"Sounds like a classic period West Coast album... Its star shines ever-brighter with age."
(Shindig!)

Bart Davenport's revered 2003 album receives its first vinyl release. Experience this connoisseur's pop gem in its true analogue glory, sourced straight from the original master tapes.

Get it at your favourite record shop or BartDavenport.Bandcamp.com

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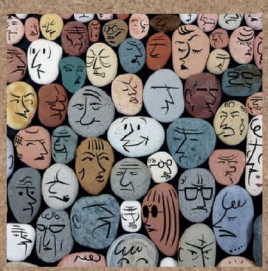
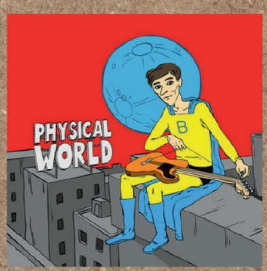
Photo by Neil Otteram



BART & THE BEDAZZLED
People Person 7"

BART & THE BEDAZZLED
Blue Motel



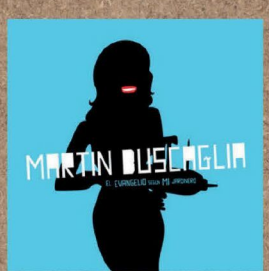
BART DAVENPORT
Physical World

CHIP WICKHAM
Blue To Red

GECKO TURNER
Somebody From Badajoz

WILD HONEY
Ruinas Futuras

SHIRLEY DAVIS & THE SILVERBACKS
Keep On Keepin' On



MARTÍN BUSCAGLIA
El Evangelio Según Mi Jardinero

JP BIMENI & THE BLACK BELTS
Give Me Hope

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Distribution: Kudos
lovemonk.bandcamp.com

Enys The Menace

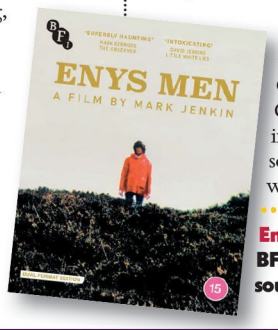
MARK JENKIN'S *Enys Men* is a hallucinatory tale of isolation and fragmented time. And, as **BOB FISCHER** discovers, it's also steeped in the legacy of a very '70s disquiet

It's 1973. On a remote Cornish island a lonely volunteer (Mary Woodvine) lives in a tumbledown cottage, ostensibly there to record the progress of a rare flower on a storm-lashed outcrop. Understandably troubled by the presence of a seemingly mobile megalith, she also finds herself haunted by ghosts of the island's tragic past: spectral 19th century lifeboatmen and doomed Victorian mineworkers. And then, with hallucinatory potency, time begins to fragment. Her shortwave radio picks up 21st century broadcasts, and flotsam washes ashore from tragedies seemingly yet to happen…

Such is the premise of *Enys Men*, the second feature from Cornish film-maker Mark Jenkin. The film's giddying, almost psychedelic approach to narrative is the result of Mark's longstanding preoccupation with the nature of time itself.

"I'm fascinated by time, and I don't like the idea of it being linear," he explains. "Because our *brains* aren't linear. And the more we think about time, the more anxious we become. We get depressed about the past or concerned about the future. And my past is different to how it was yesterday – because what's happened in the last 24 hours has changed my perspective. Similarly, my hopes and fears for the future change every day and preoccupy me."

Mark's BAFTA-winning debut feature *Bait* was shot with a vintage camera using monochrome 16mm film stock. *Enys Men* takes a similar approach, with one crucial difference: an explosion of over-saturated colour that lends the story an evocative period feel. Imagine *Don't Look Now* made by The Children's Film Foundation, augmented by a *soupçon* of Mark's beloved '70s public information films. He cites '77's *Apaches* – about a group of children being systematically bumped off on a remote farm – as a particular influence. "The people making those films had no idea of their legacy," he says. "They left impressions on kids' minds forever. It's incredible! These amazing bits of film-making created with huge limitations, with low budgets, simple equipment and no effects. People put clips of *Apaches* on Twitter saying, 'How did they get away with kids being run over by tractors?' But when you see it in full, it's a narrative film with an incredible denouement. The funeral. And the stats of how many kids *did* actually get crushed by farm gates…"

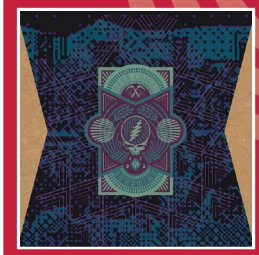


Complemented by Mark's own ambient soundtrack and a closing number from Cornish language balladeer Gwenno, *Enys Men* is a film infused with the spirits of some very dark and lonely water indeed.

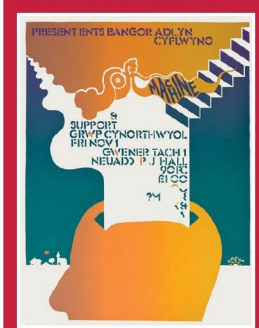
Enys Men is out now on BFI DVD and Blu-ray. The soundtrack is out on Invada

Surprisingly, it's been over a decade since there was a new **13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS** release. During this period much of the back catalogue also went out of print. *The Quest For Pure Sanity* is a new reissue series focused around definitive audio upgrades (96HZ, 24bit) taken from the earliest and best sources. To meet every level of interest, there will be facsimile editions of the original albums plus deluxe completist box sets. The 13th element is you! The next two years will see 13 releases consolidate the band's entire recorded output. The key is the latest sampler – *13 Of The Best* – comprising faithful reproductions of the original mixes plus new remixes from multi-tracks, with minimal restoration and no "remastering". Rest assured, attention to detail is paramount.
charlydirect.com/products/13-best-of-the-13th-floor-elevators

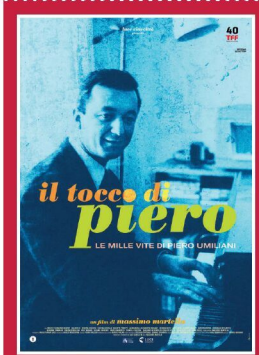
good news



While there's been no shortage of archival **GRATEFUL DEAD** releases to keep Deadheads happy over the past few years, the forthcoming *Here Comes Sunshine 1973* set offers untold riches. Containing 17 CDs of previously unreleased music captured over five shows in May and June '73, it finds the Dead road-testing material that would make up that year's *Wake Of The Flood* – their first studio album in three years and first following co-founder Pigpen's death – alongside career-spanning fan favourites, free-flowing medleys and extended jams honed during the previous year's extensive live trips. The luxurious packaging contains new artwork, prints, a poster and in-depth notation.
store.dead.net



ENFYS is an overview of screen print posters that formed the visual backdrop to Bangor University's entertainments department, probably the trippiest the Uni got since Bill Fay was a student there in the mid-60s. The work of Stuart Neesham and the Enfys design company is showcased across posters celebrating some of the acts that appeared at the University from 1972 to '76 and provides a visual backdrop for the city's Aye'cedelia scene. The exhibition also features Enfys design work for record covers of local bands such as Atgyfodiad and Brân as well as offering a series of self-published small run books. The exhibition is displayed at Storiel in Bangor Museum and runs until 8th July. Admission is free. Sunglasses are recommended.
storiel.cymru



Library music fans rejoice! A long overdue visual celebration of maestro **PIERO UMILIANI** has been announced by the late composer's daughter's Elisabetta and Alessandra. The documentary *Il Tocco Di Piero* received its first screening last month as part of Bologna Jazz Festival, and if the trailer released online is anything to go by it looks set to be a treat for anyone who's ever been bitten by the library bug and Umiliani's rich catalogue of recordings. Featuring interviews with collaborators and fans, and with *Shindig!* favourites and modern-day maestros Calibro 35 playing a key part in proceedings, it looks set to be a fitting tribute to an often-overlooked musical icon.
cinecitta.com

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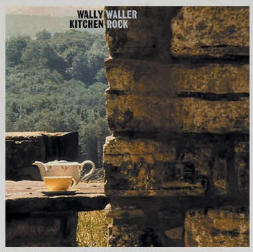

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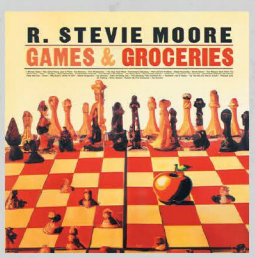

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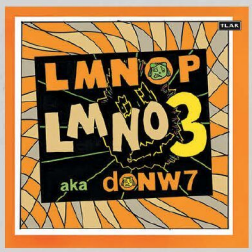

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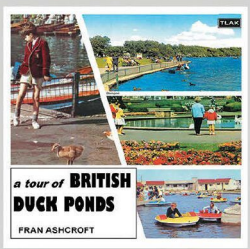

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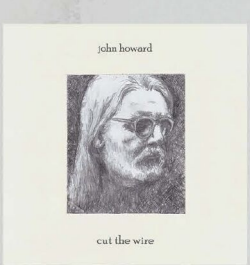

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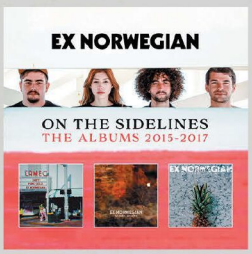

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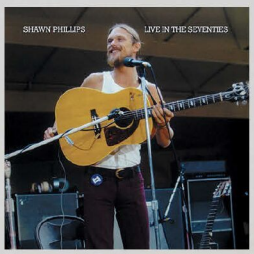

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Live In The Seventies
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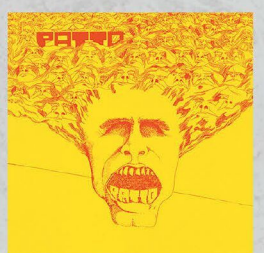

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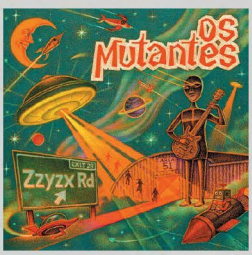

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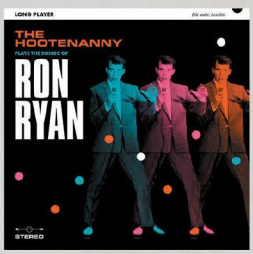

THE HOOTENANNY
Plays The Songs of Ron Ryan
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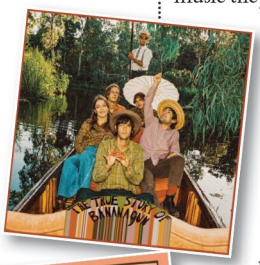
Outsiders Forever

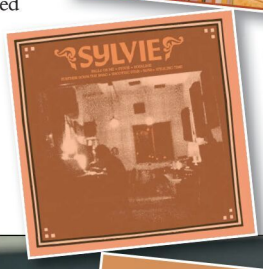
Taking cues from such pioneering indies as Elektra and Creation, **FULL TIME HOBBY** has been active for nearly 20 years, releasing music by White Denim, Jacco Gardner and other modern greats.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS picks up the story with co-founder **NIGEL ADAMS**

Full Time Hobby was set up in 2004 by Nigel Adams and Wez Westley who'd both been working together at the Australian label Mushroom's UK office. "The label was being sold to Warner Bros," explains Nigel, "and not wanting to work for a major, preferring to chart our own course, we decided to jump ship and start the label. We still own it together, but Wez focuses on Hassle, our heavier sister label." Charlie Davey came onboard a number of years back.

"We started a label at the worst time. Physical sales were starting to dip, illegal downloading was spreading and digital hadn't properly taken off," states Nigel. "Streaming has changed the industry incomparably, for good and bad. I love that a track can get picked up from an artist for seemingly no reason and take on a life of its own, reach the ears of people it may not have got to 10 or 20 years before, and how younger listeners are able to dip into any genre and era. I would have loved that ability when I was that age. On the downside, it's changed how music that is maybe more challenging is received – music where you would have bought an album, committed to it as you'd spent the cash, then put in time getting into it, even if you maybe weren't 100% sold on it at first listen."





Other technological improvements have changed how the label operates too. "We've always worked with lots of international artists," says Nigel, "but being able to find Bananagun, for example, on Bandcamp, work with them over Zoom from Australia to release their single and album was so much easier than when we began."

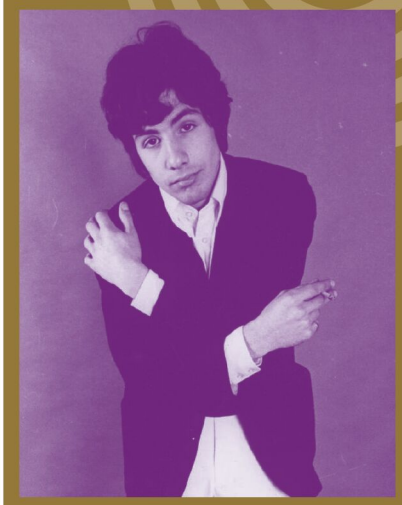
Having released music by artists *Shindig!* heavily champions, including new kids on the block Sylvie and Spencer Cullum, Nigel makes it clear how the label have to be absolutely besotted and truly believe in the music they release. "It's such a long process to help develop an artist... Once you have that love, you then decide if it's peculiar to you, or can you see that taking hold with others."

With the latest album by The Saxophones just out, next up will be the second album by Totnes-based trio Pale Blues Eyes, *This House* due out in September. "We have new signings we're starting to set up – more of that later," he signs off. "Hopefully something new from Bananagun will follow at some point too!"

Head to fulltimehobby.co.uk for the latest news

Nigel Adams and Charlie Davey: true fans
PHOTO: MAGDA KUCZMIK

next issue



CAT STEVENS
We revisit to the singer-songwriter's pop roots in Swinging London as his new album and Glastonbury slot return him to the limelight

MEIKO KAJI
The curious story of Lady Snowblood and her music

MARK VOLMAN
Looking back on The Turtles, Zappa, Flo & Eddie, Bolan and a life well-lived

ALEX HARVEY
The sensational soul man's remarkable journey through the '60s

PLUS...
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IRAINA MANCINI,
MYSTIC CHORDS OF MEMORY,
SAM BURTON

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LEAH SENIOR,
THE JACK CADES,
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Off My Stars

Debut solo album from **Mapache member**,
Sam Blasucci, Off My Stars is available
June 2, 2023

Sam Blasucci

The Direct Hits in 1985. L-R: Brian Grover, Colin Swan, Geno Buckmaster
PHOTO COURTESY OF COLIN SWAN

Forbidden Fruit

THE DIRECT HITS brought pop-art imagery and serious songwriting chops to the '80s mod scene, with second album ***HOUSE OF SECRETS*** remaining a pinnacle of the era. **ANDY MORTEN** feels 16 again

As the embers of the British 1979 mod revival cooled, a second wave of acts that eschewed the movement's machismo in favour of more refined '60s pop sensibilities rose from its ashes. The roots of some – Television Personalities, The Times, Mood Six, The Direct Hits – reached back to the punk/new-wave era. *Revolver, The Who Sell Out* and Syd's Pink Floyd became the new touchstones as paisley shirts, Beatle boots and the Alice In Wonderland club replaced sharp suits and Jam knock-offs.

At the heart of this defiantly independent scene was Whaam! Records, the mercurial label run by Daniel Treacy and Edward Ball, whose cross-pollinating mod-adjacent musical adventures resulted in releases under many monikers, including those formative Television Personalities and Times titles. The first non-TVPs/Times album released on Whaam! was *Blow Up* by The Direct Hits, a south London trio who'd released 'The Fashion Plague' as The Exits in '78 before renaming themselves in honour of the '68 Who comp and honing their songwriting chops across a series of home-made cassettes on their own Direct Tapes label. *Blow Up*, a pair of attendant 45s and a formidable reputation as a fearless live act that could present its nuanced, highly melodic repertoire in often less than salubrious surroundings soon attracted a dedicated fanbase (this writer included).

In early '85, Colin Swan (bass/vocals), Geno Buckmaster (guitar/vocals) and Brian Grover (drums) found themselves cut adrift from Whaam! successor

Dreamworld as they began considering a second album. "We stayed in contact with Dan [Treacy] but we didn't seem to fit in with what was happening there," Colin Swan tells *Shindig!* "We'd also lost faith in Clive Solomon, our publisher and sort of mentor." A chance meeting with UK punk indie Raw Records' Lee Wood marked a significant change. "Lee was very keen to do something. We said we were looking to do a new single and an album, which he readily agreed to. We were looking for a producer, and we didn't want to go back to that same cheap studio. Fortunately for us, Lee had a good working relationship with Dave Goodman, who we knew from producing The Sex Pistols' first demos. Dave was a real Beatles and Who freak, and we were impressed that he'd done his homework on our previous stuff. He told us our songs were a cut above other bands on the mod scene at that time, and first coined the tongue in cheek 'Lennon & McCartney of mod' phrase."

Armed with a stockpile of songs, The Direct Hits started recording. A 45 coupling 'She Really Didn't Care' and 'Christopher Cooper' appeared on the group's own Direct Records label in April '85. "The results were not that great production-wise, but we were keen to get something out." Yet both songs finessed the *Blow Up* template, on which '60s kitchen sink drama collided with character vignettes both real ('What Killed Aleister Crowley?') and imagined (seven-minute opus 'Henry The Unhappy Inventor'). In the grand tradition of Lennon/McCartney, Marriott/Lane and Difford/Tilbrook, Colin and Geno began as in-the-pocket collaborators but soon developed individual styles, licking each other's songs into shape where necessary. "Like most songwriting pairings, we worked on little bits of each other's songs," Colin explains. "I was writing a lot of songs away from the band at that time, which were still credited to Buckmaster/Swan because that's how we'd signed the publishing deal. My songs tended to be more Beatles; Geno's were more Who/Kinks orientated. It's probably that combination that made it something of its own."

While the debt to '66 Beatles that colours much of the material on *House Of Secrets* (working title: *A Hundred Different Colours* – a line from opener 'My Car') may slip into parody on occasion, the Buckmaster/Swan partnership nevertheless blossomed and matured across a dozen slices of melodically rich, psych-tinged pop nuggets. "We did get a little carried away with the idea of making the mod *Revolver* midway through. That kind of started with Dave Goodman. He was more obsessed with that album and that period than we were! I subconsciously began writing songs in that vein, then it sort of picked up momentum. Geno not so much, but then *The Who Sell Out* was more his agenda. I think you can hear a lot of Who in 'Miles Away' and 'Heat And Sun', but even he got hooked into that vibe with 'The Light That Shines In'. His contributions helped to avoid some parody." The majestic 'I've Got Eyes', re-recorded from a canned Whaam! single and steeped in backwards guitars and tape manipulation, remains the centre point ("We were particularly proud of that – one of our best songs.") while 'She's Not Here, There Or Anywhere' is effortless powerpop gold and '(Just Like An) Abacus' homages the Motown sound.

Photographed for the cover of the 'She Really Didn't Care' 45
PHOTO COURTESY OF COLIN SWAN

"We did get a little carried away with the idea of making the mod Revolver midway through"

Few bands associated with the '60s/mod scene of the day were quite so adventurous when it came to experimenting with instrumentation in the studio, a crucial factor that added particular appeal to those of us beginning to absorb deep '60s sounds at the time. "I'd credit the use of strings, harpsichord and sitar to Dave Goodman. He played sitar on one of Geno's tracks and arranged the string section on 'Christina'. The keyboard player was one of Geno's indirect relatives, Ronnie Lewis. Ron plays on 'My Car' and 'She's Not Herself Today' and was a proper musician, unlike us!" To the group's surprise, Clive Solomon agreed to fund further recording sessions and allowed them to release it on their own label, providing they give it a new name. The Forbidden Label was born.

Released in March '86, *House Of Secrets* did little to alter the group's trajectory, its DIY nature ensuring a small pressing and minimal distribution. "That was part and parcel of the problem with all of our stuff," Colin rues. "If there were any ladders you could climb, there was nothing to support you at the top. Going right back to Lightning Records with The Exits, and then Whaam! Records, there was never any budget for advertising or promotion. These were tiny labels run by enthusiasts."

It's those enthusiasts that enabled Colin to establish Blaamm! Records in 2003 in order to keep the catalogue of The Direct Hits and other Direct Tapes artists in print. Sitting proudly at the top of the pile is *House Of Secrets*. "In any reviews of our output, *Blow Up* seems to be preferred; I think because it's a collection of totally different songs, with more of an art crowd feel, and was far removed from what other mod associated bands were doing at the time – we earnt some kudos as songwriters with that. I think people expected more of the same with *House Of Secrets*, but what they got was a more formulated record... maybe more melodic and Beatles-y. On the other hand, there seems to be a real affection for it now. Personally, I'd say I'm equally as proud of both albums." S!

Visit blaammrecords.com for more info

I'm Guilty!

A tangled tale of teenage rebellion, young David Jones' obscure first 45 as **DAVID BOWIE** was recast as a thrillingly snotty mod revival thumper by **THE PURPLE HEARTS** in 1980.

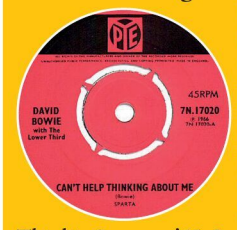
MARTIN RUDDOCK gets all narcissistic

David Bowie becomes self-obsessed in 1966; The Purple Hearts with Bob Manton, second left (inset)

CAN'T HELP THINKING ABOUT ME

By David Bowie With The Lower Third

First released: Single A-side, Pye, January 1966



Freshly signed to Pye Records by superpop doyenne Tony Hatch, failed teen pop star David Robert Jones prepared to relaunch his stillborn career for 1966 by adopting a new persona. Nobody had paid any attention to Davie Jones & The King Bees. Ditto The Manish Boys. Foiled a third time after joining latest outfit The Lower Third in Summer '65, Jones had a wobble and threatened to quit music "to study mime at Sadler's Wells" but stuck with The Lower Third and started to earn his stripes as a songwriter. Now he was hoping it would be third band and fourth single lucky for the newly christened David Bowie.

Producer Hatch certainly had high hopes, even if he remarked that his new act's early songs seemed to be about "dustbins". Hatch was less impressed with The Lower Third's scrappy Who-isms, sitting in on a clanging upright piano to fill out their sound as they cut their Pye debut at Marble Arch Studios in December '65.

'Can't Help Thinking About Me' is one of Bowie's most sophisticated early songs. With a heavy dose of kitchen sink drama, the trademark restless chord changes are already present, and here's the first appearance of that famous lyrical ambiguity. Charged by acoustic 12-strings (probably suggested by Hatch to soften the enthusiastic windmilling of guitarist Dennis Taylor), it's a folk-rock take on The Who. What exactly Bowie's narrator has done ("Seems I've blackened the family name," he intones) is left vague, but it's clearly serious enough for him to skip town. Sung mostly in his lower register, Bowie's vocal is assured (and at times slightly mannered) but you can hear the future calling when he suddenly goes full Ziggy and wails "I'm guiltyyyy!"

And then there's the wonderfully egotistic chorus line, a repeated "Can't help thinking about me." Later, perhaps less sure of himself, Bowie's audibly embarrassed at his own clumsy line of "My girlfriend calls my name, 'Hi Dave,'" ("Two of the worst lines I've ever written," he amiably conceded in '99).

Bowie, still living at home, turned 19 a week before 'Can't Help Thinking About Me' was released on 14th January '66. Two weeks later, The Lower Third disbanded, fed up with being sidelined by manager Ralph Horton. The single failed to sell, and Horton's attempts at buying its way into the *Melody Maker* chart also flopped. It also tanked in the States when Warner Brothers released it in May. Bowie's association with Pye, and replacement band The Buzz, was over within months. But 'Can't Help Thinking About Me' enjoyed a strange afterlife, granting Bowie his first appearance on an LP later in '66 when Pye smuggled it onto compilation LP *The Hitmakers Vol 4* alongside *bona fide* hits by The Kinks, The Searchers, Donovan, Sandie Shaw and The Overlanders. Hiding in plain sight, the first true David Bowie 45 was probably spun by more non-plussed teenagers on household Dansettes than we'll ever really know.

"Two of the worst lines I've ever written" – David Bowie

CAN'T HELP THINKING ABOUT ME

By The Purple Hearts

First released: *Beat That!*, Fiction, 1980

It took Pye a long time to realise what they had, belatedly reissuing 'Can't Help Thinking About Me' on an EP alongside some of Bowie's other Pye recordings in October 1972 just as the gold rush of Ziggymania was reaching fever pitch. *For The Collector: Early David Bowie* was wheeled out again sporadically through the '70s, not really connecting until a copy fell into the hands of Purple Hearts guitarist Simon Stebbing. "Simon bought this Bowie EP on Pye which had 'Can't Help Thinking About Me', 'Do Anything You Say', 'I'm Not Losing Sleep' and 'I Dig Everything' on it – that's where we got it from," Purple Hearts frontman Bob Manton tells *Shindig!*.

In a rush of excitement over the mod revival of '79, the Romford quartet had recently signed to former Jam co-producer Chris Parry's Fiction Records. Manton, Stebbing, bassist Jeff Shadbolt and drummer Gary Sparks set about recording debut album *Beat That!* across two weeks of sessions in December '79 and January '80, including their own, punchy take on 'Can't Help Thinking About Me'.

"Jeff and Simon were already into Bowie and, to a lesser extent, so was I," says Manton. "I've no particular memories of recording the song; what I do remember about the recording sessions is that it was at Morgan Studios in Willesden. We hired a lot of guitars including a Les Paul and two different 12-string Rickenbackers. A glam band called Girl were recording their debut in another of the studios with our engineer Chris Tsangarides producing, and one of them was going out with Britt Ekland at the time so one night she came to visit them. We didn't see her though."

The Hearts' version is taken at a faster pace. Slightly simplifying Bowie's hyper chord progressions, it's both janglier and more menacing, with gutsy Rickenbacker bass and machine gun drum fills. Manton delivers a lead vocal with plenty of attitude, and a punk yelp of "Let's go!" and manages to rescue the "Hi Dave" line by subbing it out for a bored sounding "Hi there". The band also sharpen up the crashing chorus.

It's a thrilling cover, and *Beat That!* remains an underrated, jagged gem. But, in a curious echo of Bowie's stint at Pye, The Purple Hearts left Fiction not long afterwards, splitting for the first time in '82, before reforming for the first of several comebacks in '84. "Chris Parry was reluctant for us to do an album saying we weren't ready, and he was probably right," says Manton, "but a lot of people seem to like it, so I guess it was the right thing to do."

Count us among those people, Bob. We can't help thinking about you.

With many thanks to Bob Manton

"Guitarist Simon Stebbing bought this Bowie EP on Pye – that's where we got it from" – Bob Manton

The Stems circa 1986 with Dom Mariani (second right)

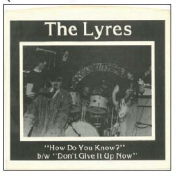
Torn In Two

Kicking off at the tail end of the '70s and enduring until the mid- to late '90s – when the term "garage-punk" became a catch-all for uninspired loud indie guitar-rock and took on an entirely new meaning – the initial '60s garage revival provided solace for those seeking an alternative to the corporate '80s and MTV.

This feral, enticing stylistic that looked back before Year Zero soon evolved, with many of the acts moving onto other things. A few, like The Fuzztones, had moderate success. The Creeps became pop stars!

Literally hundreds of singles were released across the period. Our 10 choices span the unfolding genre's first decade, taking in fuzz 'n' Farfisa, proto-psychedelia and sweet jangle

LYRES
Don't Give It Up Now
(B-side, Sounds Interesting, 1979)

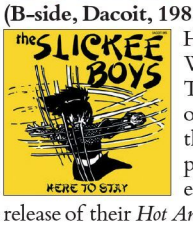


DMZ were one of New England's finest bands of the punk era, blasting out somewhat '60s inspired garage band rockers akin to The Dictators, even covering The Sonic's 'Cinderella' on their Flo & Eddie produced May 1978 major label album. When the band crumbled Jeff Connolly formed Lyres. 'Don't Give It Up Now' captures the essence and snot of the band's '60s forefathers, marked by Connolly's tough soulful vocals, trill Vox Continental organ, and Rick Carmel's Kinks-ish Danelectro guitar riffs. Unlike those that followed the doctrine, which would grow substantially across the '80s, there was no '60s revivalism in the fashion department or any sense of dayglo nostalgia. This was unadulterated rock 'n roll. *And* an original composition that carried the timelessness of the original garage band era.

THE CHESTERFIELD KINGS
Exit 9
(B-side, Living Eye, 1981)

Seventies punk was still alive and kicking in Rochester, upstate New York, when The Chesterfield Kings cut their '60s-infused debut. The scholarly and compulsive Dave Gibson had been booting '60s teenbeat and punk singles on the back of *Nuggets* for a few years, and *Pebbles* had just appeared, but garage-punk, as we know it, was still recent history exhumed by a select few, including Kings leader Greg Prevost. The "teetering on the brink of sanity" teen-punker 'Exit 9' was originally cut by Texan high school kids The Heard 12 years earlier. The Kings nail this then-completely obscuro with the passion and knowledge that all subsequent revival bands could only hope of achieving.

THE SLICKEE BOYS
Porcelain Butter Kitten
(B-side, Dacoit, 1981)



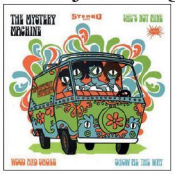
Hailing from the Washington, DC area, The Slickee Boys were one of the first throwback garage-psych bands to emerge, with the release of their *Hot And Cool* EP in 1976. Led by Kim Kane, founder, guitarist, and band mastermind, they would go on to release several seven-inchers, and a few very limited albums. Their appearance on

the first *Battle Of The Garages* album on Voxx Records in '81 established them internationally, and that same year they released the masterful 'Here To Stay' / 'Porcelain Butter Kitten' 45. The B-side, in particular, is stunning; sheer '68 punkadelic sizzle that revolves around Kim's deranged 'Pictures Of Matchstick Man' played sideways guitar riff.

PLAN 9
I Can't Stand This Love, Goodbye
(A-side, Voxx, 1981)

Formed in 1979, Rhode Island's Plan 9 (the band had nine members!) released their debut 45 on Greg Shaw's Voxx label two years later. The band had already been immersing themselves in rare garage 45s, and their blistering cover of The Others' 'I Can't Stand This Love, Goodbye' – with an equally enthusiastic take on The Nomads 'How Many Times' on the flipside – established them as an important part of the neo-garage break-out at the dawn of the '80s. Eric Stumpo's reedy garage-vocal style and Deborah DeMarco's Vox Super Continental keyboard, amidst a phalanx of guitars, became the band's signature sound, and with the release of their album *Dealing With The Dead* (Midnight Records, '83), it was clear that sonically Plan 9 were in a field of their own.

THE MYSTERY MACHINE
She's Not Mine
(A-side, Dralasite, 2021, originally from *Battle Of The Garages Vol 3*, Voxx, 1984)



Carl Rusk was 16, and already a master of appropriating the melodies of the '60s via his trusty 12-string Rickenbacker when this was cut in 1983. Singer Ray Brandes, organist Bill Calhoun, and David Klowden would go on to The Tell-Tale Hearts, whom Rusk would also join in a later line-up. This effort, along with the equally magnificent Rusk-penned Nashville Ramblers number 'The Trains', go against the grain of the incessant fuzztone and yelped vocals that are now so readily associated with the "garage revival", and show how Rusk and his fellow musical trainspotters genuinely grasped the nuances of '60s song writing and subtlety. This moody serving of jangly teenbeat could so easily have been a smash in late 1966.

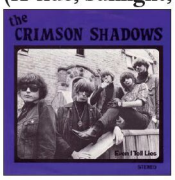
THE STOMACH MOUTHS
Wild Trip
(B-side, Månsi Sunlight, 1985)

The Swedish combo's debut 45 finds teenage angst high on the agenda, the A-side 'Don't Put Me Down' exploding with energy; a gargling, Jaggeresque vocal

"The Swedish garage bands had '60s style with punk attitude: great hair, cool boots, plenty of snarl and snot, and, most importantly, a knack for writing solid, memorable songs that were authentic without being cartoonishly derivative"

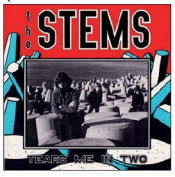
tumbles over a crazed bass driven garage beat that pays homage to '60s Pebbles classics whilst intensifying the craziness. The B-side 'Wild Trip' has a cartoon-like quality; a spoken word introduction draws the listener through a creaking door into a cave where the band literally explodes into the wildest reverb guitar solo imaginable. The Stomach Mouths lasted until '87. Band member Stefan Kéry went on to run respected mail-order and record label Subliminal Sounds. Jens Linberg, also of The Crimson Shadows, is still keeping the flame burning bright with the excellent Maharajas.

THE CRIMSON SHADOWS
Even I Tell Lies
(A-side, Sunlight, 1985)



Sweden spawned some of the finest bands of the "garage revival" movement – many of them interrelated – including The Stomach Mouths, The Creeps, The Wylde Mammoths, The Backdoor Men and The Crimson Shadows. The Swedish garage bands had '60s style with punk attitude: great hair, cool boots, plenty of snarl and snot, and, most importantly, a knack for writing solid, memorable songs that were authentic without being cartoonishly derivative. With its simple, yearning melody, jangling guitar and infernally catchy chorus, The Crimson Shadows' 'Even I Tell Lies' is an enduring classic of the era – which is why original copies of the '85 single invariably command three-figure prices today.

THE STEMS
Tears Me In Two
(A-side, Citadel, 1985)



A loud Farfisa riff recalling The Music Machine is the guts of 'Tears Me In Two'. The flip 'Can't Resist' is a Chocolate Watch Band-like epic with choral backing vocals and walls of jangling fuzz. The 45 is probably the best thing they ever did, although lovers of their mellower Byrdsian powerpop direction will no doubt disagree. The band's short life (they split in 1987) made waves in Australian pop history and band leader Dom Mariani became an established powerpop guru, but this is their perfect moment.

THE WYLDE MAMMOTHS
Help That Girl
(A-side, Crypt, 1988)

This Swedish group were the epitome of insouciant, teen garage nonchalance! 'Help That Girl', the lead track from their 1988 EP of the same name, is one of their finest creations. Deliriously infectious, this is mid-paced, early Kinks R&B that crashes – demolition derby style – into Byrds-style country/folk-rock territory, all the while staying resolutely punk. Man, those guitars slay; as does Peter Maniette's lip-curling vocal. Crypt Records also released the group's two stellar LPs *Go Baby Go* ('87) and *Things That Matter* ('88).

THE PURITANS
Grace Hotel
(A-side, Mr Spaceman, 1989)

The Puritans from Melbourne, Australia, released a tidy pile of high-quality garage/R&B records between 1988 and '94. 'Grace Hotel' is a potent distillation of their sound. The song came to Nick Phillips in a fever dream as he lay sweating and hallucinating on the floor of a hut in a small Thai village, the Grace Hotel a name he glanced at in a guidebook next to him. By the time his fever broke, he had the words and music. Back in Melbourne, Nick's fever dream became The Puritans' first single, a dark, haunting rave-up on which the intense lead vocal, moaning back-ups, slippery bass, jagged guitar and violent, discordant organ replicate the fear and disorientation of a mental breakdown: a real or hallucinated "fall from grace". SI

Contributors: Richard Allen, Lenny Helsing, Jon 'Mojo' Mills, Greg Prevost, Ian O'Sullivan, Mike Stax

The Stomach Mouths' Speed Freak is out now on Busy Bee

I Was A Teenage Werewolf

Of all the bands that looked back to the unhinged maverick rockabilly of the '50s and the spooky garage bands of the '60s, **THE CRAMPS** were among the first to mutate those aesthetics into something darkly unique.

CATHI UNSWORTH charts their Frankenstein's Monster-like birth

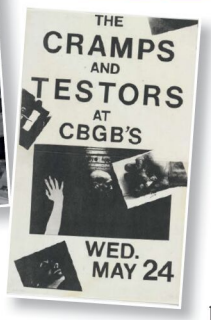
"*Spin* magazine wrote an entire issue on CBGBs and that whole scene from 1976. We weren't mentioned in it anywhere." Lux and Ivy on stage in London, '86; terrifying the audience at CBGBs (opposite)

Ivy and Lux arrived in punk's transatlantic rival capital in 1975, after reading about wild goings-on at its Bowery epicentre, CBGBs, in *Rock Scene* magazine. By then, the couple had been together three years.

Their paths first crossed in the summer of '72, when, mesmerised by a vision at the roadside, 25-year-old Alice Cooper fan Erick Purkhiser stopped to pick up 19-year-old hitchhiker Kristy Wallace in Sacramento, California. In some of their reminisces, she was wearing cut-off jeans and a vintage '30s top, in others a see-through plastic rain mac and nothing else but high heels, artfully teased red hair and make-up "like a cross between Julie Driscoll and Marc Bolan". On the dashboard between them lay a prospectus from Sacramento City College – and it was here that they met for the second time, having both enrolled in a course entitled Art & Shamanism. According to Ivy, this was based on English archaeologist and Dead Sea Scrolls scholar John M Allegro's controversial '70 tome *The Sacred Mushroom And The Cross,* in which the author posits first that the roots of Christianity lie in ancient fertility cults whose followers routinely ingested hallucinogens to receive divine messages, and second that Jesus Himself was a product of psycho-active mushroom ingestion – a practice the couple had already engaged in with encouraging results.

The erstwhile Kristy Marlana Wallace was born on 20th February '53 in San Bernadino, California, the youngest of three children with a mysterious father who worked in the nuclear industry and moved his family around multiple times before finally settling in Sacramento. The child who enjoyed blowing up her Barbie dolls with firecrackers and flying around the room to The Ran-Dells' 'Martian Hop' grew into a rebellious teen, twice thrown out of high school for smoking and dress infractions. She picked up the basics of surf guitar from her older brother and worked out the rest herself – listening to Link Wray and watching Bo Diddley perform with his rhythm guitar sidekick Norma-Jean Wofford, aka The Duchess, resplendent in skin-tight gold lamé catsuits. Kristy's experiments with hallucinogens began at the age of 14 when she first got her hands on some Orange Sunshine, made in '67 by infamous hippy chemist and Grateful Dead soundman Owsley Stanley. She said she took it for 100 days without ever having a bad trip.

The former Erick Lee Purkhiser was born on 21st October '46 in the suburban town of Stow, Ohio, eight miles from the "rubber capital of the world", Akron, where his father, a strict Catholic, was a foreman at the Goodyear tyre factory. Erick was the middle of three brothers and it was elder sibling Ron who introduced him to the joys of Hank Williams and Elvis as a child. A nearby live rock 'n' roll club called The Doghouse and an addiction to EC comics and cult WJW Channel 8 Horror TV host Ernie Earle



"In some of their reminisces, she was wearing cut-off jeans and a vintage '30s top, in others a see-through plastic rain mac and nothing else but high heels, artfully teased red hair and make-up"

Anderson, aka Ghoulardi, shaped his destiny. Determined to swerve a life of industrial grind, he was thrown out of the navy for failing a drugs test and followed an Alice Cooper tour across the States to Sacramento, where, while tripping on mescaline, he received his own personal portent: a plastic 'Dead Babies' torso landed straight on his lap.

Two months later, the couple met, began living together and rebaptised themselves. Erick took his new name from a car ad, Kristy fasted for six days before taking magic mushrooms and receiving the name Poison Ivy Rorschach in a vision. Pooling their considerable record collections, they began to conceptualise a band and took a series of dead-end jobs – from selling clothes in flea markets to working in a circuit board factory – to fund their relocation to New York. All the while, they learned how to sing and play the songs that set their souls on fire.

At first, the Gotham City omens looked good. Lux got a job at the Musical Maze record store at 83rd and Lexington, where he met Bryan Gregory (neé Beckerleg), a recent arrival from Detroit, who shared Ivy's birthday – the date on which they met in '76. Having found herself a rare solid-body Lewis guitar in a shop on 48th Street, Ivy bestowed on Bryan her Flying V. Despite his lack of musical training – Gregory had come to New York to study graphic design – he was a kindred spirit. "We were almost the same size and could fit into each other's pants and shoes," Ivy said. "We understood each other because we weren't the boy/ girl next door."

Bryan recruited his sister Pam, aka Pam Balam, to play drums, but never having picked up sticks before, she lasted only a few rehearsals. Her replacement, Miriam Linna, who had equally limited experience, managed to last a year as The Cramps took their first steps in the NY live arena, encouraged by fellow Ohio transplants The Dead Boys and Linna's roommates, Teenage Jesus & The Jerks. After her departure, it was the latter's drummer, Bradley Field, who recommended another Ohio refugee to audition – Nick Knox (aka Nick Stephanoff), who'd previously drummed for Cleveland's Electric Eels.

This proved more of a trial for Lux and Gregory than it was for Knox. "The truth is we thought the guy was just too weird," Lux told *Mojo*'s Bill Holdship, "he seemed so unfriendly and angry and couldn't talk on top of it – but I told him his hair was too long. That night we ran into him at Max's [Kansas City, another pivotal NYC punk incubator] and he'd cut his hair. "Now will you give me an audition?" – and I was impressed enough to say yes. "Good," he answered, "because if you said no, I was gonna punch your face in."' This attitude went down well with Ivy, then supplementing the band's income working as a dominatrix. Knox was in for the next 13 years.

Though they also forged a kinship with The Ramones, inspired by their similar stance as a gang of degenerate brothers – a male punk version of The Ronettes or The Shangri-La's in black leather jackets – The Cramps were routinely written out of New York's musical history. As an incredulous Lux told *Sounds*' Edwin Pouncey, "*Spin* magazine wrote an entire issue on CBGBs and that whole scene from '76. We weren't mentioned in it anywhere. We played 50 times at Max's Kansas City and once a month for three years at CBGB's. I asked one of the people on that magazine why, and they said, 'Well, we had a meeting on that and we decided that you're not really a punk band, you guys are just weird.'"

Yet The Cramps' weird is very much America's weird – the music they channelled and created is the authentic voice of the real punk, from lipsticked hillbilly hep cat to dragged-up blues howler. Lux and Ivy instinctively understood all that was great about what Ivy memorably called "the sound of southern culture falling apart in a blaze of pick-ups". In the same Sandy Robertson interview, Lux divined the difference between his way of thinking and that of one of NYC's more revered punk icons when discussing 'Surfin' Bird': 'I think it stands for the unimportance of words in rock 'n' roll, except for sound. Y'know: "Thebirdisthewordthe birdisthewordthebirdistheword." It says something more than Patti Smith might say in a whole side of an album." S!

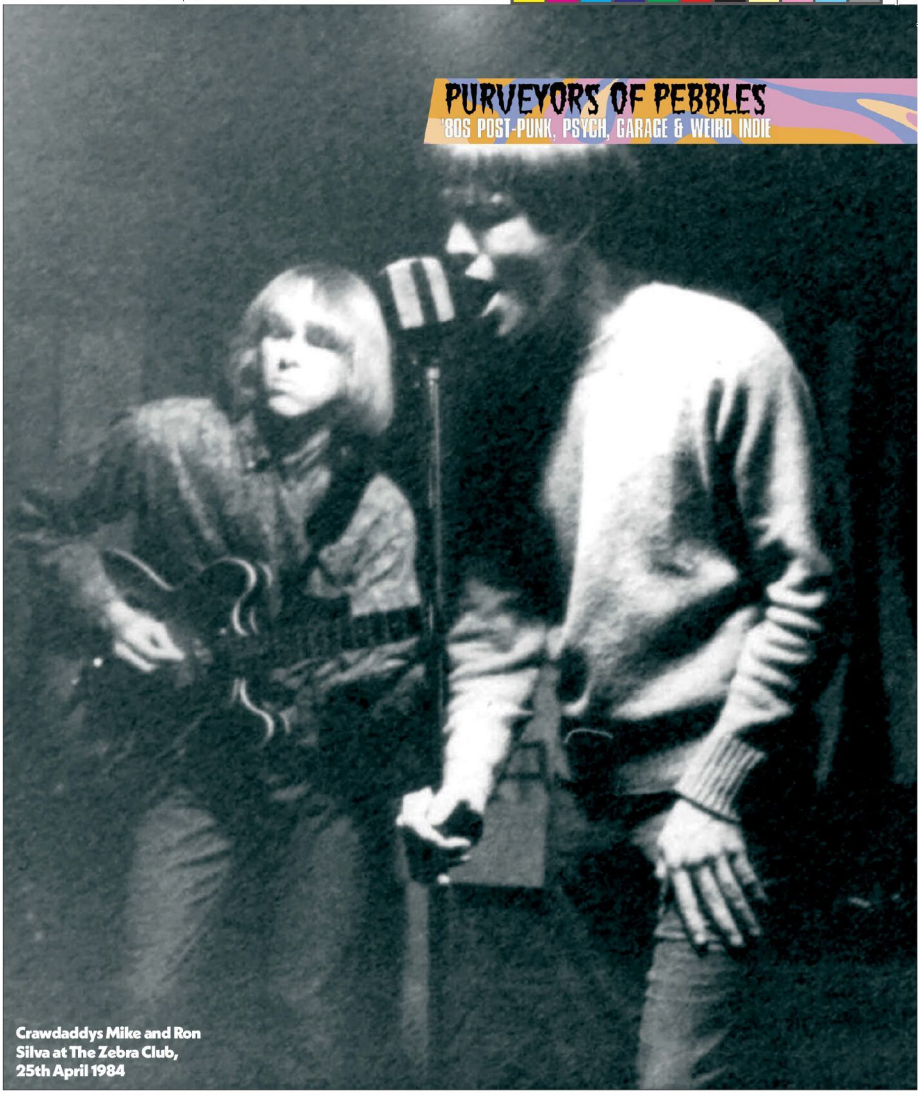
Extracted from Season Of The Witch: The Book Of Goth published by Nine Eight Books

Mike Stax at home in San Diego, 2017. "Whatever happened I would've been a writer and I would've been in a band." PHOTO: DAN CHUSID

Wild Sounds From Past Dimensions

MIKE STAX has been at the coalface of "looking back" since obsessing over the music of the previous decade as a kid in the early '70s. Upping sticks from England as a teen to play R&B with The Crawdaddys in San Diego, he settled in California where he further embraced his passions, forming The Tell-Tale Hearts and starting *Ugly Things* magazine, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS learns about life on the "subterranean level"



Crawdaddys Mike and Ron Silva at The Zebra Club, 25th April 1984

***Shindig!*:** As a kid coming of age in the '70s what were your rites of passage before the almighty smack in the face of punk?
Mike Stax: My mum remembers me dancing to 'Jumpin' Jack Flash' on the radio when I was a child. I also remember listening to The Beatles' *Rubber Soul* and *Help!* on headphones from a reel-to-reel tape of my dad's. But, like a lot of kids of my generation, my musical awakening arrived when I saw David Bowie performing 'Starman' and not long afterwards 'The Jean Genie' on *Top Of The Pops*. I was 10 years old and after that I was never the same. Discovering Bowie opened up so many new and exciting worlds to explore. Before I was in my teens I was listening to The Velvet Underground, The Yardbirds, The Who and The Pretty Things, and albums like *Raw Power* and *Transformer* – all because of Bowie – and I was also heavily into the '60s Rolling Stones years. Brian Jones was an early obsession. When I was 14, I travelled to Cheltenham to visit his grave. These were all rites of passage for me during my juvenile years. When punk arrived in 1976 it wasn't an "almighty slap in the face", but rather something that had been fermenting for some time. I was an avid reader of the music papers, especially the *NME*, so I saw it building incrementally, week by week, like a long fuse. It was a thrill when that long fuse exploded in late '76 with the Pistols on Bill Grundy. The next few years were exciting as there were great singles by new bands released almost every week, and also opportunities to see them live – providing one of my friends' dads would give us all a ride into to the city and then pick us up after the show!

***S!*:** You were born in Watford but moved around during your first 18 years. Describe your England.
MS: I spent my early childhood in Cheshire, then a couple of years in Leicestershire, and finally a move north to Yorkshire, in a little village outside of Leeds. My England was pretty typical of that time, I suppose: attending a comprehensive school, and saving up money from my paper round and dishwashing jobs to buy records every weekend – more and more '60 records and less and less new records. I had a small circle of friends, fellow weirdos and outsiders with eclectic music tastes and the same twisted sense of humour. We'd get together on weekends and record strange, silly, funny songs, most of them written more or less spontaneously. Eventually that became a "real" band that played a few gigs in 1979-80.

***S!*:** You left the UK because The Crawdaddys replied to your fan letter and invited you to play bass with them! What was the culture shock like of moving to Southern California in the early '80s?
MS: Yeah, that's exactly what happened. There was definitely a degree of culture shock involved. The world was a lot larger then. Ordinary British people didn't travel abroad that much – except to holiday spots in the south of Spain. The furthest I'd ever travelled was to Malta for a family holiday. That was the only other time I'd even been on a plane. I was 18 years old and had never lived away from home before. My impressions of California were based on what I'd read in books or seen in the movies or on TV detective shows. I was naive and inexperienced, far from home and far from talented. But somehow it worked out. Southern California is a beautiful place and now it feels like home.

"When punk rock arrived in 1976 it wasn't an 'almighty slap in the face', but rather something that had been fermenting for some time"

***S!*:** You started your long-running *Ugly Things* magazine in 1983. What was your inspiration?
MS: I'd been reading fanzines like *Bam Balam* and *Who Put the Bomp!* since my mid-teens. They were a huge inspiration for me starting my own. I was discovering so much amazing music from the '60s and I felt that more people needed to know about it. I was absolutely convinced that if people were exposed to the music of bands like The Pretty Things, The Music Machine and Q65 they'd become converts and immediately throw away all of their Van Halen and Duran Duran records. That was my mission. Still is.

***S!*:** What led to the demise of The Crawdaddys and you forming The Tell-Tale Hearts?
MS: It was that old cliché "musical differences". I wanted The Crawdaddys to play more original material, like the songs that had so impressed me on their *5 x 4* EP back when I was still in England. But they were content to play the same old R&B and soul covers. I was getting more and more into 1966-67 garage and freakbeat, and they wouldn't move the calendar past December '64. It was time for a change.

***S!*:** In hindsight how important was Greg Shaw and Voxx for bands like yours and your pals?

MS: Greg Shaw was hugely important. It was Greg who forwarded my fan letter to The Crawdaddys and urged them to write back to me. Without Greg I may never have moved to America. When I arrived, he was extremely supportive and encouraging. After I sent him The Tell-Tale Hearts' first demo, he immediately offered us an album deal. He did the same with other bands like The Gravedigger V, The Miracle Workers and The Pandoras. He had this vision of a worldwide movement of garage bands that would bring back that sound. He nurtured that movement and helped it proliferate. It would never have happened on the scale it did without Greg Shaw.

***S!*:** How long did it take for you to feel part of "a scene"? And how would you describe it?

MS: It took a couple of years. By the middle of 1982 it was beginning to feel like an actual scene when we (The Crawdaddys at that point) would play on bills with bands from LA like The Unclaimed, The Bangs (who became The Bangles) and The Salvation Army (who became The Three O'Clock). These bands were all quite different musically, but shared a passion for various types of garage, pop and psych from the '60s. The scene grew even bigger in '83 when a cluster of new garage bands formed, including The Tell-Tale Hearts. By then I was corresponding with like-minded people in Europe and Australia, all of whom were either forming bands, publishing fanzines or both, so there was a sense that this scene was taking root everywhere – just like Greg Shaw envisioned.

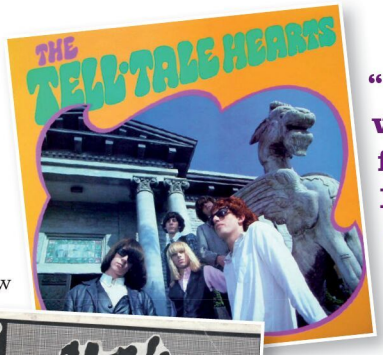
Mike with The Tell-Tale Hearts in 1985; '84's debut album; *Ugly Things* issue 5 (opposite)
PHOTO: DAVID J WATKINS

The Tell-Tale Hearts in 1985, with Mike, middle
PHOTO: TONY SANCHEZ

***S!*:** Who did you particularly rate from what, for better or worse, would be deemed the garage revival?
MS: I liked The Unclaimed, The Chesterfield Kings, Lyres, Plasticland, The Vipers, The Miracle Workers, The Thanes, The Beatpack, The Mystreated, The Aardvarks, The Crimson Shadows, The Creeps, The Stomach Mouths, The Dukes, The Puritans, The Stems, The Kliek – more bands than I expected when I started making this list actually (and I'm sure I missed a few).

***S!*:** After The Tell-Tale Hearts collapsed you formed The Barons and then a new line-up of The Tell-Tale Hearts, who, if I'm right, you cut the 'Take A Look Inside' and 'Circus Mind' singles with. What was good about this new version? What went wrong?
MS: Everything went wrong. I think we managed to make some pretty good music, such as our version of 'Circus Mind' (which received a seal of approval from Phil May), but it was a struggle, mostly due to the, shall we say, "personal" problems of a certain key band member (not me). I don't have a lot of fond memories of this period.

***S!*:** The Hoods made a handful of singles and an album, and lasted until 1993. Things were changing on the Southern Californian scene at the time, weren't they? The short-lived Evil Eyes marked a move towards punk-rock.
MS: I formed The Hoods in 1989 with Ron Swart from the later Tell-Tale Hearts line-up and three ex-members of The Trebels: Jay Wiseman, Xavier Anaya and John Chilson. It was a fresh start and a lot of fun, especially in the beginning. Jay and I made a good songwriting team, and I improved my skills in that area, and also in singing harmony with him and Ron. But the garage scene in the US had dissipated by then. Grunge was happening and all the old garage bands suddenly went "heavy". Except for us, we were playing Coasters and Bo Diddley songs and modelling ourselves on The Downliners Sect and The Yardbirds. Talk about being out of step with the times. Towards the end a '70s punk influence had crept in, for better or worse, but we eventually ran out of steam. Jay reconfigured the band as The Evil Eyes, and I played bass with them



"The scene grew even bigger in 1983 when a cluster of new garage bands formed, including The Tell-Tale Hearts. By then I was corresponding with like-minded people in Europe and Australia, all of whom were either forming bands, publishing fanzines, or both"

for a couple of months, but my heart wasn't in it. I was completely burned out on the entire band experience, so I took a little time off to rethink and get my head together.

S!: When and why did you decide to form The Loons? How did it feel to take on the role of the singer? What were your aims?
MS: After a lot of thought, I realised I needed to challenge myself. I was bored with playing bass and wanted to have more control over the songwriting, especially the lyrics, so I decided it was time to step up and form a new band with myself as lead singer. I had remained good friends with Eric Bacher, the original Tell-Tale Hearts guitarist, and we began writing songs together and it felt right. So, in late 1995 we formed The Loons. Being a lead singer was difficult for me at first; it took me a couple of years to gain confidence and get the hang of it, but I enjoyed the challenge and the newfound creative freedom. After almost 30 years, and a few line-up changes, The Loons are still going strong with me (lead vocals), Anja Stax (bass, vocals), Marc Schroeder (guitar), Chris Marsteller (guitar) and Chris Cancelliere (drums).

S!: In 2002 you started publishing books with titles on The Pretty Things and Misunderstood, but you spent 15 years or so piecing together your search for Craig Smith in *Swim Through The Darkness,* to the point where you said that it had become an obsession. Did you feel a sense of closure once the book was released? What do you think it is about Craig's story that makes it so interesting?
MS: Researching and writing *Swim Through The Darkness* was a long and emotional journey. Piecing together the story of a person who was homeless for most of their life is very difficult because they don't leave much of a paper trail. It's even more difficult when that person's last name is Smith. So, putting together all the pieces required a lot of legwork and countless hours of work, including time spent chasing up leads that went nowhere. I felt a huge sense of closure when I completed the book because I had become so emotionally invested in Craig's story. I wish that closure would have involved a happier ending, but ultimately, I feel proud to have at least documented a life that would otherwise have been forgotten, and to have brought his amazing lost music out into the light of day. What makes Craig's story so fascinating is that it shows the dark side of the '60s dream, and how easily a life can be sent off the rails simply by taking a wrong fork in the road.

S!: Craig's brother Gary got in touch after the book's release, which is how the release of *Apache/Inca* came about. You've previously referenced that there's more unreleased Chris & Craig material. Is this likely to see the light of day?
MS: Chris & Craig were signed to Capitol and did several recording sessions there, working with producers like Nick Venet and Steve Douglas. But, except for one single, it was all shelved. There's at least an album's worth of unreleased material, some of it in the Capitol vaults and some on acetates saved by Gary, including a staggeringly beautiful version of the Tim Buckley song 'Wings'. Plans are in the works to get all of this released. It will happen.

S!: You've enabled and resuscitated a number of your favourite artists from the '60s, The Misunderstood spring to mind. What elements of this have given you the most satisfaction, and why?
MS: I'm happy anytime we can help an overlooked band get recognition for their work. Working with The Misunderstood was especially satisfying because they were a visionary band whose dreams were cruelly shattered because of the Vietnam war draft. Playing that music onstage with Glenn Campbell and The Loons was a transcendent experience I'll remember as long as I live.

S!: Although we have multi-channel TV, streaming platforms, Amazon etc, where everything is available 24/7 by picking up your phone, youngsters like Melanie at *MOOF* are still producing print fanzines, and there are more record shops than ever. What is it about physical media? The Kindle and the internet didn't kill print and Spotify didn't kill vinyl. In your youth records and books were the only options, but now it has become artisan and somewhat bespoke (you only have to consider the price of vinyl). In an era of commercial hip-hop and TV talent shows, indie music and related publications will never become overground, but they're still here. Is this a final flutter as a backlash or something "folk" that can never be replaced?
MS: It's something "real" that can never be replaced. Physical media, whether it's vinyl, books or magazines, offers a tactile, multi-layered, multi-sensory experience that digital media can't give you. Take *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. The Beatles made an artistic statement with that album that wasn't purely about the incredible music. Poring over the rich visuals of that gatefold jacket and the insert, reading the lyrics, flipping the record over halfway through, and tripping out to the locked groove at the end of Side Two were part of a larger experience that enhanced and elevated the music in a stimulating and meaningful way that can never be reproduced with digital media. Or on a more personal level, at 14 years old, taking a bus into Leeds and waiting outside the record shop before it opened so I could buy 'God Save The Queen' on the day it was released, then having to conceal this dangerous contraband from my parents. All of that imbued that one seven-inch record with an emotional resonance that has stayed with me. You can't get that from a Spotify playlist. It's much the same with magazines and books.

S!: Technology plays such a huge part in life today, from marketing your band to selling your wares. Obviously, the digital platform has spread the reach of *Ugly Things*. But have you noticed a downside in that many people may be happy to follow your socials and listen your podcast but won't make the commitment to subscribe? The pros surely outweigh that, though. What have the positives been?
MS: As you said, the positive outweigh the negatives. Technology has helped us to reach a lot more people with the magazine, the podcast, and the band. It's also a lot easier to track down people and research stories – although proper research involves a lot more than consulting Google. Ideally every social media follower would also subscribe to the

magazine, but I don't expect them to – that's not the way the world works. As long as we're engaging with people and continuing to stoke their interest, I'm reasonably happy.

S!: Mainstream glossy music monthlies have struggled over the past 10 years with many going under. On one hand, it's an aging audience. Kids don't buy music monthlies, let alone weeklies. On the other, the major publishers and their editors seem to have lost the plot, focusing on the same vintage legends again and again and again, and dabbling with all manner of breaking music that doesn't really appeal to the demographic. When did mainstream music journalism lose its spark? What's changed from the glory days? Has rock writing become an old boys' club? How can it continue and remain valid when algorithms provide kids what the *NME* offered you?

MS: All of that is true, but I feel that there is still a place for print journalism and music magazines in particular. The key is offering something that you can't get elsewhere. In the case of *Ugly Things*, we're writing about bands and music that aren't covered anywhere else, especially in the kind of depth and detail we offer. Digital publishing has reduced attention spans because long-form articles are not easy or comfortable to read on small screens. So the digital world mostly serves up fast, superficial, bite-sized chunks – "content" with very little actual content. Many people are happy being fed that way, but they're not getting much in the way of mental nourishment. Most mainstream publications have fallen into the same trap because they assume that's what people want these days – and those magazines will struggle and eventually die, if they haven't already. But, as I see it, the printed page allows us the freedom to print longer articles and reviews. In *Ugly Things* our stories are anywhere from 3,000 to 40,000 words long; our reviews may be 200 or 2,000 words. Our readers are passionate about music and fascinated by the stories behind it. They enjoy the experience of escaping from the superficial, narcissistic digital world, kicking back with a printed magazine and feeding their minds. Also, importantly, they appreciate owning a physical artefact, something that they can put on a shelf and revisit, just like a vinyl album or a book. It's a niche market, but I've seen an influx of younger readers in recent years and an overall increase in circulation. In essence, *Ugly Things* is still a fanzine, unconcerned with demographics and algorithms, and firmly ensconced in the underground. I've no interest in mainstream overground culture so I'm happy to continue to hang on the subterranean level. The most creative and innovative music, art and literature have always originated from the underground, and that will never change.

S!: Having the ability to access to practically everything recorded without having to vastly expand your record collection, have you discovered more music and expanded your tastes in later life, or are you catholic in your tastes?

"I just enjoy making music with my friends and the feeling of connecting with an audience when we play live" Mike and The Loons, with wife Anja, left; 2015's *Inside Out Your Mind*
CREDIT: LORI SOKOLOWSKI

MS: I'm always discovering more music, though not necessarily through streaming. In recent years I've been digging more deeply into jazz, especially '60s era jazz. It's an entirely different universe of incredible music that has opened up new pathways to explore. So, my tastes are broadening in some ways but narrowing in others. I'm constantly listening and reassessing. Some records that sounded great to me 20 years ago seem a little underwhelming now, whereas others only seem to get better over time. There are probably 50 albums that I return to again and again. But the search for new sounds to surprise and excite me will never end.

S!: Over the years the sound of The Loons has significantly moved away from the raw '60s garage R&B of your first bands. Putting aside your passion for the original garage bands, do you think such garage-punk has anything fresh to say in 2023 or has it all been done? You've seen garage and psych revivals and rebirths across three decades. You've played '60s events. You've played to locals. You tour Spain to excitable rock 'n' roll fans. Where does the band fit in today's climate and what's the future – for you and genuine rock 'n' roll bands?

MS: I don't know whether garage-punk has anything fresh to say in 2023 – or if it ever did. But I think there will always be a place for it. Basic, primal three/four/five chord rock 'n' roll played with the right instruments, the right gear and the right attitude is timeless and will always stir up some excitement, whether it's played in a garage, a sweaty dive bar or a festival stage. How do The Loons fit into today's climate? I don't even think about that; I just enjoy making music with my friends and the feeling of connecting with an audience when we play live. That's an experience that can only be delivered in person by humans onstage. That's the future for genuine rock 'n' roll bands.

S!: How do you think your life might have transpired had you not taken the major decision to up sticks from England to get on board the R&B express with The Crawdaddys then The Tell-Tale Hearts over in sunny California, USA… and do you think you would've still arrived at the point of *Ugly Things*? America has changed, as has the world. It seems a lot smaller and far easier for like-minded souls to connect than it did 40 years ago.

MS: Interesting question! I think the die was already cast: whatever happened I would've been a writer and I would've been in a band. Probably I'd be living in London, and meeting at the pub every weekend with my friends from *Shindig!* magazine.

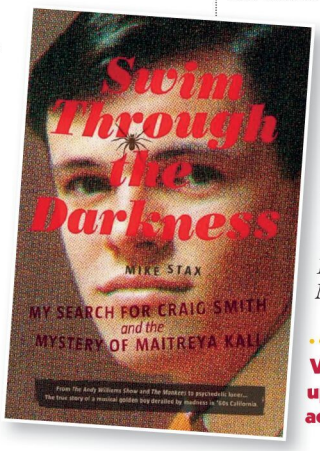
S!: What new projects and ventures can we expect from you across 2023?

MS: We're celebrating the 40th anniversary of *Ugly Things* magazine with a weekender at The Casbah in San Diego, 25-26th August. We should have a new Loons album completed and hopefully released by the end of the year, along with a new single on Disques Rogue. James Archer and I have some interesting podcast episodes in the pipeline, and of course there'll be three issues of the magazine published. I'm also working on two books. One is about guitarist Gabor Szabo, with co-writer David Holzer, which we hope to finish by the end of the year. The other is an official biography of Phil May of The Pretty Things. That one may take a couple of years, as I'm going deep, conducting lots of new interviews as well as using material from Phil's personal diaries, journals and sketchbooks, some dating back to the '60s. S!

Contributors: Sèan Casey, Lenny Helsing, Jon 'Mojo' Mills, Andy Morten, Phil Suggitt

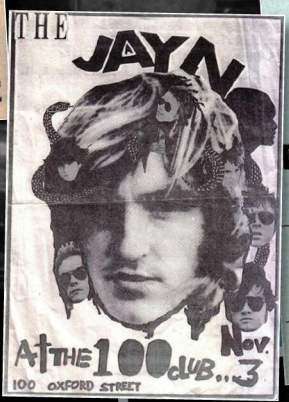
Mike in 2019 celebrating the 50th issue of *Ugly Things*; his acclaimed Craig Smith investigation *Swim Through The Darkness*

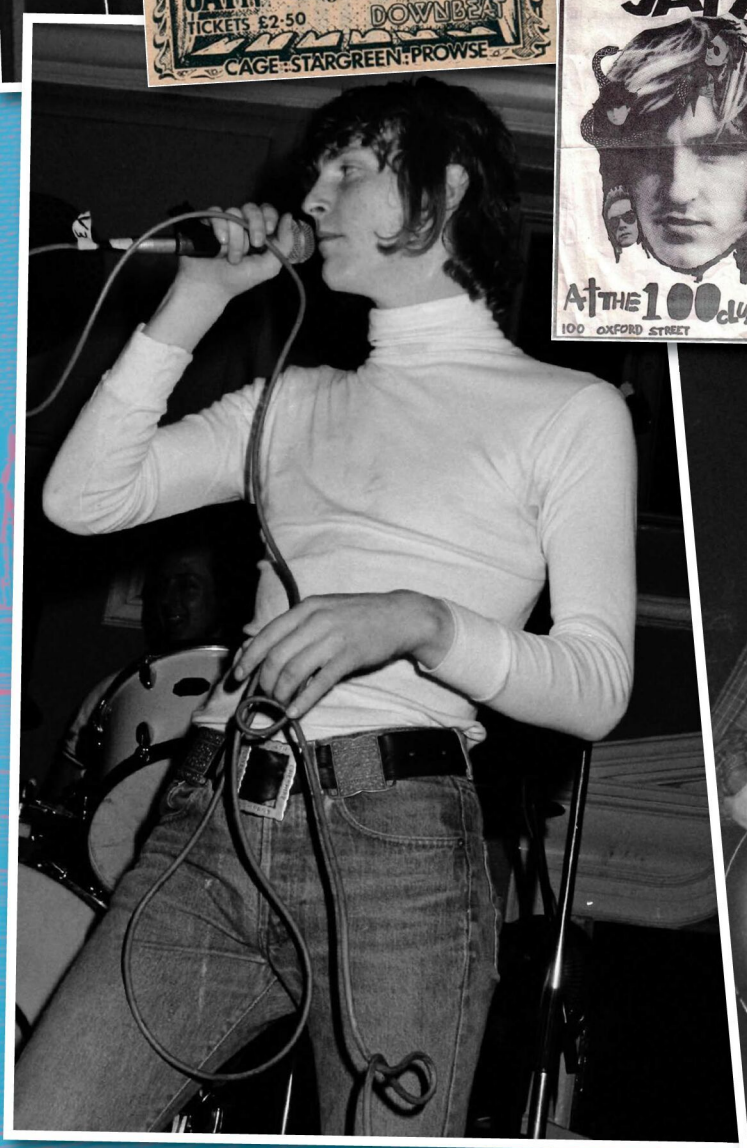
"*Ugly Things* is still a fanzine, unconcerned with demographics and algorithms, and firmly ensconced in the underground"

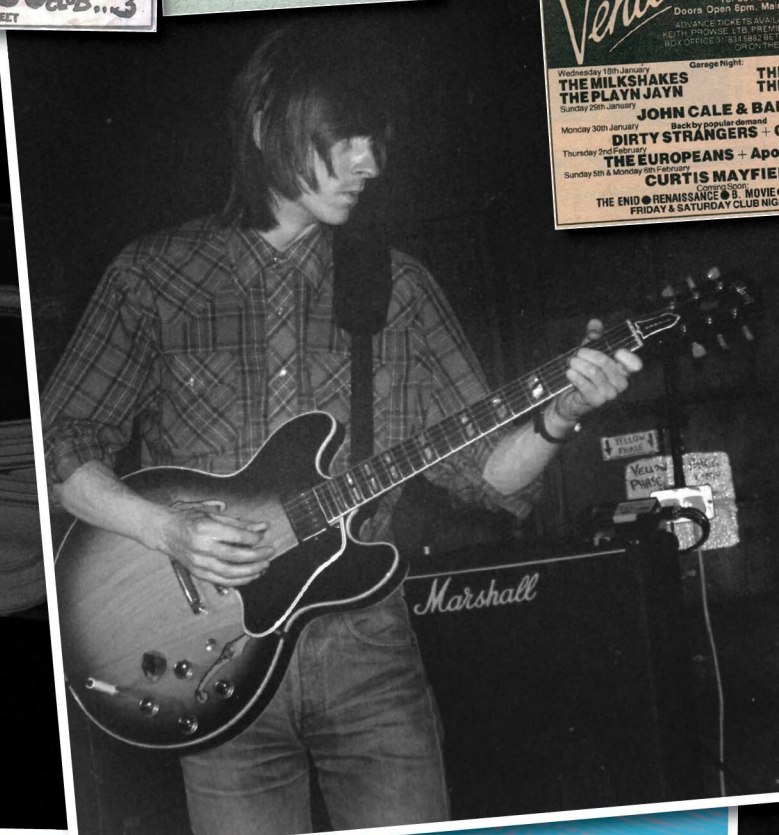


Visit ugly-things.com to keep up to speed with all of Mike's activities.

"The two Playn Jayn front men always seemed to have each other's backs." Craig Lindsay and Mike Jones with bassist Errol Suleyman at The Clarendon, London, 1984; London gig flyers; Mike at The Clarendon (below left); Nick (below right) and Mike and Craig (opposite) soundcheck at The Marquee







HAVING A GOOD TIME (AIN'T NO CRIME)

Along with The Prisoners, **THE PLAYN JAYN** are fondly remembered by many as being one of the most exciting, visceral live bands to emerge from London's "blink and you'll miss it" psychedelic pub-rock scene of the early '80s. Yet self-destructive tendencies and major label indifference shut them down too soon. **PHIL SUGGITT** investigates

Almost all of the music of the '60s, '70s and '80s – the good, the not so good and the just plain ugly – has been reissued or repressed. Almost no stone has been unturned. Almost. The Playn Jayn are one of the few exceptions; their two mid-80s albums have never even been transferred to CD, let alone been afforded the bespoke vinyl treatment. Lack of quality is not the explanation. For a band that had disappeared from the scene by the '90s, Facebook and YouTube abound with clear and very fond memories of their live gigs in the mid-80s. Many consider them to be among the best live acts they ever witnessed.

A Playn Jayn gig was always a distinctive and memorable experience. The audience was confronted with not one but two lead vocalists: an approach that was rare and novel at the time. On the right was Craig Lindsay, the smaller of the two frontmen, the one that girls checked out first, with fresh-faced pop star good looks. On the left was the tall and rangy figure of Mike Jones, the one with the strange but striking mod haircut, a little crazier and more unpredictable. Behind them, often eschewing the limelight, were lead guitarist Nick Jones (brother of Mike) and the rhythm section of Clive Francis on drums and Errol Suleyman on bass.

Clive remembers getting on well with the Jones brothers at a party at one of the innumerable and massive London squats that existed in the early '80s. The brothers said they were in a band called The Zoo and were playing a support gig at The Marquee in Wardour Street. Clive liked what he saw and after an audition in a South London rehearsal studio he replaced the previous drummer, whose primitive, punky style didn't suit the group. Mike Jones felt that Clive's jazz training gave them a much more sophisticated sound.

With a nucleus of the Jones brothers, the band went through several incarnations as The Zoodoo, The Idd and then The Zoo. They learnt their craft in small clubs and pubs. "We played in small, seedy places," confirms Nick. "I remember one disaster, set up by our early manager John," recalls Clive. "He hired this hall and said he would do loads of publicity. About six or seven people turned up. We gave them a good show anyway, we always did. Without the ticket money we couldn't pay for the hall, so we had to climb out the back window – easy for the singers, not so easy with a drum kit!

"Shortly after that [in 1982], we changed our name from The Zoo to The Playn Jayn, partly because there was a dance group on TV at the time called The Zoo." (Following on from Pan's People and Legs & Co, choreographer Flick Colby's *Top Of The Pops* dance troupe between '81 and '83 was called The Zoo. Usually, they danced when performers couldn't appear on the show, so the dawn of the pop video rendered them largely superfluous.) Nick Jones once suggested an additional reason for the name change – he liked the idea of being in a "Y" band like The Byrds, with its '60s and psychedelic connotations.

The re-named band gigged relentlessly. "We started to get more of a following," agrees Clive. "We played everywhere we could: pubs, clubs, colleges. I remember playing on the back of a lorry at a Rock Against Racism demo in London. At one point the generator packed up, leaving me playing drums and the rest of the band just dancing around like mad things. I vaguely remember playing at some festival in a muddy field, with my drum kit perched on two old doors we'd managed to find, to stop it sinking into the mud."

A consistent theme in online recollections is people seeing the band as a support act they hadn't specially come to see, and then being so impressed by their tight live show they have little memory of the actual headliner. The band's sound wasn't typical of trends but had some elements in common with The Groovy Cellar and brief UK neo-psychedelic revival of the early decade. In a *Bucketfull of Brains* interview Mike had reservations. "We saw 'the psychedelic movement' for what it was," he said. "We're into music and those people weren't, particularly." Detour Records aptly summarised the music as "rooted in crafted '60s English pop but drawn towards the more cracked elements of American psychedelia." Like The Barracudas, the songs showed clear '60s garage, psych and pop influences, but were not overtly retro. The music contained mod and R&B stylings, and the vocals had the punch of a Paul Weller Jam vocal, but otherwise was unlike the mod revival bands of the era.

The Playn Jayn started to become a strong live draw outside London, although the logistics often proved difficult. Clive recalls, "Often we couldn't make it back to London and we had to sleep in a freezing cold van overnight. We got quite into the study of mycology and would often stop the van to examine mushrooms in local fields." Clive does not reveal if the band were searching for mushrooms of a magical variety to sustain their travels around the country.

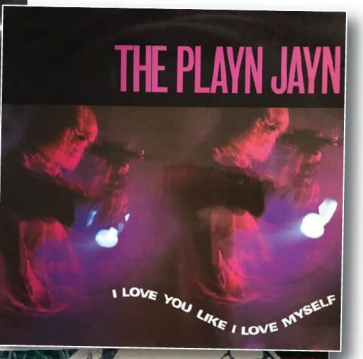
Regular gigging got them noticed. Clive confirms that they developed a European fan base. "Our big break came when we were signed to the Wasted Talent agency. Our gigs got bigger and better. The first time we played abroad was, I think, Frankfurt. We stood in at the last minute for another British band that had dropped out. After that we played a few times in Germany. I remember getting so mixed up at this German service station, with this poor young German waitress who didn't know any English (why should she?). I did some German evening classes after that.

Craig, Mike and Nick perform at Chelsea College, 1982

"WE SAW 'THE PSYCHEDELIC MOVEMENT' FOR WHAT IT WAS. WE'RE INTO MUSIC AND THOSE PEOPLE WEREN'T, PARTICULARLY" MIKE JONES

"On one of our trips to Germany, we went in a transit van, painted all over with a Union Jack. We'd managed to miss the boat that would have taken us to Belgium and had to catch the ferry across to France. On our way out of France, the customs took a dislike to our Union Jack van and virtually dismantled it, and strip-searched us, looking for drugs. Probably as a result, the van broke down in Germany and we had to find a hotel in the middle of the night. I don't know if this was the same tour, but I vaguely remember East German border guards pushing our van through a border checkpoint into the East German corridor to Berlin. This was before the Berlin Wall came down, so you had to travel through a narrow

Craig, Mike and Errol at The Clarendon, 1984 (main pic); ABC promo; The Playn Jayn. L-R: Nick Jones, Errol Suleyman, Mike Jones, Craig Lindsay, Clive Francis; Craig on stage; Mike reaches out; live debut *Friday The 13th*; A&M promo



The obligatory champagne photo as the band signs to A&M; *Five Good Evils* photo shoot; 'I Love You Like I Love Myself' 45 and the album

corridor to get to West Berlin. This is where we played one of our best gigs. We played a very stylish club in Berlin, where everyone seemed to be dressed in striking black & white clothes. Our first number was met with complete silence. They all stared at us, as if to say, 'Go on then, you English bastards, show us what you can do.' We didn't care. We liked a challenge. At the end of the night, we got three encores out of them and nearly brought the house down. We also played in Amsterdam and supported The Fleshtones on their tour of France. I think we might even have appeared on French TV. I remember a large camera being pointed at my left ear. Again, we managed to mess up crossing the channel, getting Dieppe mixed up with Dunkirk and ending up in completely the wrong part of France. As a result, we missed the first gig."

In '84 a bright future looked possible when The Playn Jayn signed a record deal – not with a fledgling indie but with A&M, one of the biggest labels in the world. In retrospect, a small and nurturing operation might have been a better fit.

It's something of an unwritten rule in the pop music industry that an act should not make their debut album a live recording, particularly if the group is new, relatively inexperienced and virtually unknown to the general public. The Playn Jayn's live prowess was evident, and it could have been an inspired move by A&M's A&R department to break with received industry wisdom by making the band's first LP a live recording. Mike Jones told *Bucketfull Of Brains* that the live album was "a mutual decision that we weren't ready to do anything else and we needed a record out".

The omens were good. It was decided to record a gig at The Marquee, a venue that the band had played so regularly that they felt like they were the house band or had a residency. They always attracted a large and enthusiastic crowd. Vic Maile was chosen as producer. Having worked with many famous names, he was highly respected, especially due to his track record with live recordings such as The Who*'s Live At Leeds*. Peter Gunn of The Inmates said Maile's great strength was a natural understanding of rock 'n' roll. There were other favourable omens. The gig was set for Friday 13th July, and, as Mike and Craig gleefully told the audience, it was the night of the full moon.

Friday The 13th (Live At The Marquee) divides opinion. Some fans revere it as an honest live document, a memento of dozens of explosive live shows, while others feel it was a missed opportunity to show the band at their best – that a live recording never quite lives up to the experience of being in the audience, being in the moment.

Leaving the quality of the music aside, A&M never seemed to have complete confidence in the commercial possibilities of the recording. The album was advertised by Our Price records at a discount price of £2.99, about half the regular price of an LP at the time. The record cover announced a "limited edition" at a "special price", which was possibly code for "people will take a punt on this bargain priced collectors' edition" but it ultimately meant "not many copies have been pressed", "it will be difficult to find a copy at your local store" and "the musicians won't be making much money from this". A&M only released the live album in the UK, despite its potential audience in Europe and the States.

The band usually opened their live set with the excellent 'Cardinal Charlotte's Memorial School', but this was a surprising omission. It was apparent from the opening 'You Weren't Born You Were Created' that Mike and Craig were a proper double act. They never acted like the contestants on TV talent show "battles", on which the vocalists desperately try to outdo each other. In complete contrast, the two Playn Jayn front men always seemed to have each other's backs. A fan compared them to a tennis doubles team; instinctively they knew just when to get in close to take a shot, and when to stand back from the net and let their partner step up. Often, as on the memorable 'If I Stayed Where I Was I Wouldn't Be Where I Am', it was difficult to tell which one of them was singing.

Released in August '84, *Friday The 13th* reached #93 in the charts. No singles were lifted, although there was a promo 45 of 'In Your Eyes', backed with non-LP song 'Mezcal'. Mick Jones told a fan at Dingwall's that Mezcal was a psychedelic drink that induced hallucinations, but despite the similar name, it is a spirit distilled from agave and does not contain mescalin or any psychedelic substances.

Not all the songs quite hit the spot. Some of them smouldered, threatening to burst into life, but didn't quite ignite, such as the closing track 'Rockin' Hearse', which was usually a big crowd pleaser. Sometimes the overall sound was a little sparse, with Nick's lone guitar sounding as if it needed more embellishment or support.

The band continued to attract a small but highly committed following. On their first headlining tour they drew healthy crowds of between 150 and 200. They would regularly join the crowd after a gig,

Five more evils; Craig with fan club secretary Georgia backstage at The Marquee

"AT ONE POINT WE WENT FOR A DRINK WITH STEVE MARRIOTT. WE GOT ON WITH HIM REALLY WELL AND HE HAD SOME GOOD IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO PRODUCE US. HE WANTED TO RECORD US LIVE IN THE STUDIO TO KEEP THE ENERGY OF THE BAND" CLIVE FRANCIS

to dance to the deejay or other bands, or just to chat about music. Rumours circulated that A&M was using the band as a tax write-off, but there was never any hard evidence of that. A studio album was planned for '85, and several producers were considered.

"At one point we went for a drink with Steve Marriott," recounts Clive. "We got on with him really well and he had some good ideas about how to record and produce us. He wanted to record us mainly live in the studio to keep the energy of the band. In the end A&M got cold feet because they thought he was too unreliable. (He had a half bottle of whiskey in his inside pocket.) Pity really. He might have suited us." The producer eventually chosen was Hein Hoven, an American who lived and worked in England in the '80s, producing a variety of artists including The Truth, The Damned and The Stray Cats, who were very successful at the time.

After the ensuing *Five Good Evils* was completed, A&M dropped the band, but they still possessed the finished tapes. They re-negotiated a deal with the short-lived ABC Records, and the LP was released in July '85. Like the debut, all 11 songs were composed by the Jones brothers. Devotees of the live album feel the studio album was over-produced and too polished. It was rumoured that the band were unhappy with a producer imposed on them by the label, but they strongly defended the production in interviews. "It's not a million miles from where we are," stated Nick. "I don't want people to think this isn't the band they saw last night. That's what you've got to avoid, obviously." To this writer's ears, Hoven did a good job. The album is refreshingly free of '80s production excesses; there are no annoying synth parts or drums that sound like explosions. Hoven did his best to showcase the strengths of the dual vocals, which are more restrained and less frantic, especially on the slower numbers. The songs are, in general, more melodic, with memorable hooks. 'I Love You Like I Love Myself' and 'Sixty Seconds Too Late' are good examples. The Jones brothers had a knack for hooks that weren't immediately obvious but soon burrowed into your head.

Keyboard player Mat Deveraux was added to the studio sessions. On the excellent 'Dig My Own Grave' the organ is the prominent lead instrument and becomes the essence of the song. Elsewhere Deveraux's playing is never showy or obtrusive, and his contributions add a great deal of depth and texture to the overall sound. Although not a member of the band at the time he was a friend, not a mere session player, and joined them on stage on several occasions.

At their best, the Jayn managed to create a unique sound, incorporating many '60s influences but not really sounding like any of them. Sadly, *Five Good Evils* didn't make much commercial impact. Two singles from the album made little impression, and the record company let the band go. Some new demos were recorded, in the hope of interesting other labels, but there were no takers. Two of the last recordings recently saw the light of day as a single on UK archive label Circle – finally seeing release after almost 37 years. The intriguingly titled 'Cardinal Charlotte's Memorial School', the band's usual set opener, is a fine example of The Playn Jayn sound. Circle has announced their intention to compile other unreleased recordings.

Certainly, such material does exist: a live recording of a complete gig at The 100 Club in May '85 can be heard on YouTube, although the sound is of bootleg quality. One of the songs from this concert, the previously unreleased 'I Love You Love', is also included on the YouTube *The Imaginary Live EP*, a compilation of four live recordings, including the aforementioned 'Cardinal Charlotte', at the Psychedelic Beat Weekender in Frankfurt in June '85. The highlight is a version of 'Dig My Own Grave' recorded in Vicenza, Italy, which is very different to the album version. Without the organ it becomes a frenzied guitar work-out.

Without a record deal it was difficult for a band to survive professionally in the second half of the '80s, as Clive confirms. "As for the money, I can't remember there ever being any." The band could still deliver a great live show, even after Craig Lindsey decided to leave in '86. The brothers briefly carried on as The Jayn and then The Other Side (not to be confused with the Dutch band of the same name) but they eventually called it a day. Tragically, Craig died in 2009 at the age of 48. Information about Mike Jones is sparse, but he is said to be in poor health. Brother Nick became a professional photographer.

Clive adds a last word. "We weren't the most organised band (sometimes they failed to show up to gigs towards the end) but I wouldn't change it for the world. Travelling around and playing with The Playn Jayn was like being inside a fairy tale; so many weird and wonderful characters and adventures." S!

With thanks to Clive Francis

A Playn Jayn reissue project has been pitched to a number of labels. Watch this space

FOUR GOOD REASONS

How did four figureheads of Sweden's purist garage scene become platinum-selling, major label pop stars?
JON 'MOJO' MILLS unravels **THE CREEPS'** unlikely journey with the help of band members and eyetwitness accounts.
"It went too fast. Everybody, including the company people, were not prepared for that"

Blessed with the almighty singing voice of Robert Jelinek, whom bassist Anders Johansson claims to be "the greatest singer in the whole of Europe", and tight dynamic musicianship, The Creeps were a notch above their wild contemporaries when it came to sheer talent. Even though their huge success should not come as a major surprise, the conversation of how they sold out is still commonplace among fans of their initial '60s-inspired era. Mans P Mansson of primal garage-punks The Crimson Shadows remembers their transformation. "To suddenly appear in those silly costumes and glitter wasn't so far away for someone who loved Little Richard to begin with, right?"

PURVEYORS OF PEBBLES

'80S POST-PUNK, PSYCH, GARAGE & WEIRD INDIE

"It was raw and explosive. Robert Jelinek blew everyone away with his incredible voice and electric performance." The Creeps circa 1986. L-R: Robert Jelinek, Hans Ingemansson, Anders Johansson and Patrick Olsson

Back in the late '70s Robert Jelinek and schoolfriend Ismail Samie had progressed from glam to the emerging punk sounds of The Ramones, Generation X, Buzzcocks, and '60s acts like The Kinks and The Who. Jelinek was obsessed with The Damned and Samie with The Beatles. As the Swedish mod revival, centred around Paul Weller and The Jam, followed closely behind the UK, Samie took up drums and formed mod band The Pow with Hans Ingemansson (guitar/vocals) and Stefan Nilsson (bass). Jelinek was already playing guitar and singing in a punk band. When The Pow were about to venture to Germany and Austria, Jelinek was asked to join. The quartet became fully immersed in the mod/'60s scene, releasing two cassette EPs on the popular Hamburg label FAB. "Suddenly Robert was in the group and adopting more '60s threads," says Samie of their singer's move towards the new aesthetic.

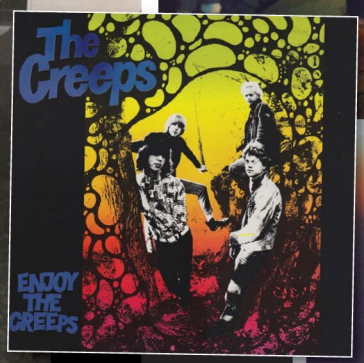
In a short period of time, The Pow became The Backdoor Men (named after The Shadows Of Knight's second album) and fully immersed themselves in the '60s garage-punk sound of The Chocolate Watchband and The Music Machine – while looking every inch the mid-60s US teen band, all Brian Jones hair and rollneck sweaters. "We happened to have a shop in our hometown of Älmhult, run by an older gentleman, way past retirement," explains Jelinek. "He sold new, original authentic '60s gear. He hadn't even changed the price tags since the '60s. That place was a gold mine."

The Backdoor Men were soon recognised as the first word in cool. The lads from Sweden became pivotal in the European underground – as obsessed as The Chocolate Factory, who were their close friends in Hamburg, the epicentre of the '60s scene. Graham Day of UK mod/garage heroes The Prisoners remembers being blown away by the band when playing together in the city in January '85. The night was caught live on tape with The Prisoners joining The Backdoor Men on stage for a rendition of 'Louie Louie'. Jelinek concurs, "That was one glorious night. I think we'll all remember it until the day we die."

While playing with The Backdoor Men, Jelinek was also continuing with his own band, now known as The Creeps, with a new line-up including two seasoned local players, Anders Johansson (bass) and Patrick Olsson (drums). A demo cassette was recorded in '84; its first track 'You're Gonna Need My Lovin'' was featured on '85 comp *A Real Cool Time: Distorted Sounds From The North*, alongside other Swedish acts that were making waves in the post-punk landscape. 'You're Gonna Need My Lovin'' is typical of the Scandinavian sound at that precise moment in time, mixing the rockin' edge of The Cramps with garage. If The Backdoor Men were a purist '60s band, the tight, driving unit of The Creeps, featuring two punks and two mop-tops, were less concerned with image and authenticity. Olsson jokes, "Yeah, Ismail was very correct, and looked very good. He had a mirror between himself and the drum kit."

The Backdoor Men issued their debut single later that same year on Swedish label Tracks On Wax. 'Out Of My Mind' / 'Magic Girl' has been classified as the "greatest garage 45 of the '90s" by many. Label head Jörgen Johansson had discovered The Backdoor Men through a fellow collector in the lads' hometown. As a seller of '60s beat and garage, Johansson was smitten, eager to release a single. "Jörgen was funded by a local farmer up in Lidköping," explains Jelinek about the label, which had already released records by burgeoning Swedish garage acts The Wayward Souls, Watermelon Men and Cornflake Zoo. "As I understand it, he was a person who wasn't into music, but he liked Jörgen somehow and what he did, and he had lots of money." With a single under their belts The Backdoor Men became something of a sensation. Meanwhile, The Creeps were already taking off and expanding with "Backdoor Man" Hans joining on Farfisa. "We did a couple of gigs together, and they always blew us off stage," remembers The Backdoor Men's Samie of the professional dynamism of the new look Creeps. "I was a weak drummer compared to Patrick."

The Creeps had a powerful sound that recalled the pounding Northwest R&B of The Sonics. Jelinek remembers that "Johansson expanded our vision by introducing us to a lot of old Afro-American R&B. 'Where did those psychedelic garage bands get their stuff



Anders, Hans (opposite) and Patrick enjoy life on the road circa 1986; The Backdoor Men 45 featuring Hans and Robert; *We Give You The Creeps* cassette, '83; '86 debut *Enjoy The Creeps*; the group lip-syncs to 'Creep' on French TV, '86 (right and top right)

"In Sweden, the established music press sneered at us because they thought we were too retro"

from?' I would ask. 'Well, they got that from The British Invasion. The Rolling Stones, Pretty Things and Animals got their sound from Black artists.'" Jelinek then worked backwards and incorporated those influences into The Creeps' emerging sound.

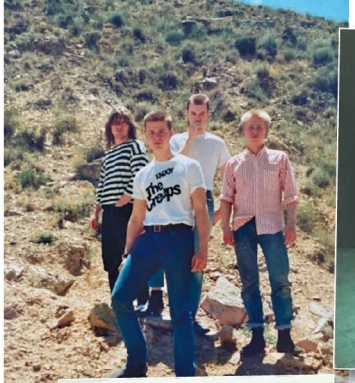
The band were soon recorded by public service broadcasting for Swedish radio. "A rumour started spreading that we were really good," recalls Jelinik. "People came from near and far to see our shows. We didn't play that frequently either. Maybe it was a gig every month or so." But word was out that The Creeps were a powerhouse of a band that were certainly going to make an impact.

Mansson recalls how The Creeps first made an appearance on a cassette compilation in '85 called *Blizzard Beat Vol 1*, released by the fanzine *Straight From The Grooveyard*, where his band The Crimson Shadows also had a song included. "It was raw and explosive. Robert Jelinek blew everyone away with his incredible voice and electric performance. I bonded quickly with him over our shared love for Little Richard and Bo Diddley! We would hang out and party every time we met. They brought a professionalism to the scene that we hadn't really had before, and it was pretty obvious that if any of the garage bands on the scene would go anywhere, it was them."

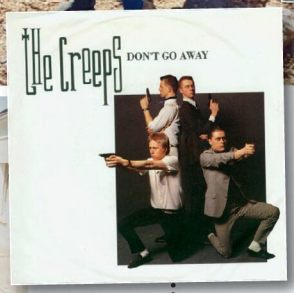
In early '86, work began on debut album *Enjoy The Creeps* for Tracks On Wax, which was recorded quickly with Lave Hindholm. The self-penned songs were all impressive: the marvellous opener 'Down At The Nightclub', the cocksure garage statement of intent 'Ain't No Square', and heartfelt bluesy ballads 'Come Back, Baby' and 'Darling' made The Creeps seem more authentic and genuine than their contemporaries. Two Sonics covers, 'Maintaining My Cool' and 'I'm A Rolling Stone' (from '67's *Introducing The Sonics*), and *Back From The Grave #5* classic The Illusions' 'City Of People', showed where they were coming from and played into the hands of "their crowd".

Soon after, The Backdoor Men crumbled due to the musical prowess of The Creeps stealing the original band's thunder. Jelinek becoming the object of Samie's girlfriend's desire was the icing on the cake. The two didn't talk for years afterwards. Meanwhile, the four members of The Creeps completed their required military service.... after which the band constantly toured across Europe, often with their crazy friends from Stockholm, The Stomach Mouths. "In Italy we were met by hysteria," laughs Jelinek. "In Sweden, though, the established music press sneered at us because they thought we were too retro. They didn't really want to take us seriously and acknowledge that there might have been some musical qualities here and there. *Enjoy The Creeps* got mixed reviews." Even still, the audiences grew, and the band became more assured, happily rebelling against the sterile '80s with their raw sound and unapologetic '60s stance.

It soon dawned on Robert, living in Stockholm after naval service, that they needed a manager. As well as being the singer, guitarist, songwriter and frontman, he was managing the band's limited financial affairs, booking gigs, and organising everything. Yet they couldn't live off the music. Enter the American expat John Gray, who was running a small booking agency called Madhouse. Johnny Thunders and Jerry Nolan, who were based in the city at this time, were his first clients. The Stockholm press got drift of these New York junkie rockers, which caused a huge scandal. Being business-



Changing times, changing haircuts. The Creeps broaden their outlook in the late '80s with second album *Now Dig This!;* a pair of militaty fans with album promo poster



minded, Gray made this work in their favour. He saw something in The Creeps too, and began managing them, using his American heft and savvy to take them up a rung on the ladder.

Gray had big plans. He was certain Jelinek's soulful accent-free voice could break America and that The Creeps would be the most successful Swedish band since ABBA. Talks were hatched with major label WEA about a decent deal.

After appearing twice on new rock music TV show *Gig*, recorded live in both Stockholm and Gothenburg, The Creeps had an opportunity that moved them many rungs up from their humble club gigs, personally invited by Marie Fredricksson to be Roxette's support on a tour. "It went too fast," says Jelinek of their meteoric rise. "Everybody, including the company people, were not prepared for that. They presented a plan the first time we sat down around a table together, saying that after we recorded the album, they were expecting things would build slowly on the back of our existing fanbase."

Now Dig This! was released on WEA in the summer of '88 with the cover featuring a new look band, with short hair and dressed in suits. Jelinek's short hair came about the year before whilst touring in the heat of Greece. Having naturally wavy hair was a bane. Hans' grew into a Brian Jones shape, but Robert had to blow dry his every day. He had enough and cut it short, realising that a Blue Note jazz look would top it off. "I must say at that time," he confesses, "when it had started getting a little bit too much with the 'Puritan '60s nerds', it was refreshing to stand out and be different." The label, however, exerted no pressure to ditch the "garage look".

To make *Now Dig This!* WEA had booked The Creeps into the biggest recording facility in Sweden, ABBA's studio in Stockholm, Polar. The producer was to be American Kevin Lamb. However, with zero notice, Lamb left for America to tour with The Beach Boys. Jelinek and the band were left without a producer, and worked with sound engineer Robert Wellefors, a veteran of the punk scene, to produce the album themselves. "He had the right attitude and didn't want to polish us," says Jelinek. With a Hammond replacing the Farfisa and a more soulful R&B sound overall, *Now Dig This!* was a logical follow on from the breakthrough album. Less garage, but no less urgent. 'One Good Reason' combined soulful mod-pop with Hammond, not unlike The Creeps' closest musical allies, the recently split Prisoners. The following year it was even mooted that Jelinek would work with The Prisoners' James Taylor, who had just moved to Sweden. Alas, it was never to be.

The Roxette tour the following summer was a massive success with The Creeps winning over crowds in excess of 10,000 at the outdoor shows. "The average Swede was there," laughs Jelinek. From constantly gigging across Scandinavia their name grew and grew. And the band gigged and gigged to exhausting levels.

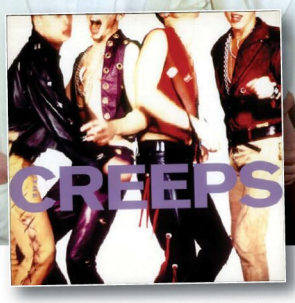
Considering Jelinek was fanatical about Bo Diddley and Little Richard, it was inevitable that he would stumble across the funk recordings of James Brown and Sly & The Family Stone. And he did. "Already at the time of writing the songs for the second album, I had bought *There's A Riot Goin' On*," he admits. "Like I said, it was always a matter of going back to the source… This was the real thing. You could feel this music in every cell of your body." Whilst recording at Polar, the band found a VHS video of Sly & The Family Stone's performance at Woodstock and became obsessed.

Work began on The Creeps' third album in late '89, with a rather frazzled Jelinek dressing himself and his band in luminescent pimp gear that would soon divide opinions among their original fanbase. *Blue Tomato* would also take on a different sound. Recorded once again at Polar, this time with Clarence Öfwerman (son of the famed jazz producer Rune), the sound remained focused on the funky Hammond and Robert's vocal smarts, and although riding on a wave of soul and funk influences, the band played to a click track for the first time and implemented sequencers. Jelinek agrees that the album is "marred by the transition in technology" and has a "time stamp" on it. If of its time, the songs and performances stand up. 'Ooh – I Like It' was a massive hit, reaching #6 in Sweden, and the band became stars across the recently launched MTV Europe, pipping Sinead O'Connor to the International Viewer's Choice Award and picked up Swedish Grammy Artists Of The Year. Not bad for a band that four years earlier had been garage-punk rebels that hated the mainstream, and whose biggest hit liberally borrowed the main organ riff from Brian Auger & The Trinity's 'Black Cat'.

"It was kinda weird for me, as I thought the '80s garage scene was a reaction against the mainstream and a way to have our own little universe – and now they were suddenly on 'the other side' playing it up for the mainstream," says Mans P Mansson, who, along with the rest of the Stockholm garage cognoscenti, was invited to the debut *Blue Tomato* show in the city. "But I don't remember any jealousy or animosity from our side. I mean, kids who just wanna play music suddenly get a chance to do it full time and become pop stars and get offered loads of money – who wouldn't! I think that the kinda humour/joke vibe they adopted maybe was a protective shield… that they tried not to take shit too seriously among all that happened."

"It was surreal," claims Jelinek. "We had never strived to become major. We never thought it would ever happen. We felt anti-everything, even more." At shows in Italy, The Fuzztones-style "garage crowd" even spat at the "pimped up Creeps", and Robert relished that. It had all come to a head.

The sudden celebrity status and



"We had never strived to become major. We never thought it would ever happen. We felt anti-everything, even more"

Fame and fortune at last! Hans, Robert, Anders and Patrick tidy up their act; on stage around the time of 1990's third album *Blue Tomato*

touring, TV appearances, and being mobbed by fans led to exhaustion, with Jelinek admitting he had a breakdown. Nineteen-Ninety was a huge year for the band, although their manager's dream of breaking the UK didn't happen, even after an expensive press campaign including a large gig in London. Jelinek thinks this was because the UK had not really adopted MTV Europe; it was only being readily screened in hotels and shops and had not taken off in the home market. That September the band was supposed to go to LA to pick up an MTV award but just didn't have the energy. They were close to folding and becoming even more famous was the last thing on their minds. Management was furious. Jelinek temporarily moved to Amsterdam to be with Monique Klemann, his new girlfriend from the pop duo Lois Lane, who had also been dating Prince. He and Klemann quickly broke up, and he returned home to Sweden, where he focused on learning how to use a sequencer on his newly bought Atari and had surgery on his leg. He was laid up over the winter, feeling lonely and uncertain of where both his and The Creeps' future lay. To make matters worse, Gray, keen to follow up the mass success of *Blue Tomato*, was asking him where the new songs were.

Jelinek took it easy until the end of '91. The following summer The Creeps headlined The Hultsfred Festival, playing in front of 22,000 people. "We were at our *Spinal Tap* peak by then. We got a huge wage for that gig. And I spent more or less all of it paying a number of clothes designers to make costumes for us. We had envisioned that we wanted to record a funk opera in space as *Blue Tomato's* follow up. I was influenced by cyberpunk literature." Jelinek had been hard at work writing and composing the conceptual piece, complete with spoken interludes. When he presented it to WEA, they told him he had lost it. "Of course I had," laughs Jelinek with hindsight. "We were doing nothing new. George Clinton and Parliament did that 15 years before us."

Gray and the label wanted three-minute pop songs, and the band would be sent off to England to get to work at The Chipping Norton Recording Studio in the leafy surrounds of the Cotswolds. The ambitious manager was not giving up on The Creeps cracking the USA. He even hired someone in New York to assist him. All of the songs Jelinek had written were in the band's set as far back as the festival, but they were uncertain on how and when to record them. "I recall meeting Robert in '92 at my place and playing him The Beastie Boys' *Check Your Head* and smoking weed," remembers Samie on the back of the two school pals rekindling their friendship. "I was telling him that would be a nice way to go with The Creeps instead of that joke look they had just got over. Not the rap thing but how funky the Beasties sounded on *Check Your Head*."

Gray and Jelinek booked a flight to London to meet up with Stones' producer Jimmy Miller, who was just out of rehab and clearly not up to the job. Eventually Craig Leon, who had an amazing track record with The Ramones, Blondie and numerous others, ended up on board. Jelinek remembers him being more interested in buying expensive wine and antique books than producing The Creeps. "He wanted to put horns on everything and new keyboards. He didn't see the point of the Hammond." Both the band and management were unhappy with Leon's work.

Back in Sweden, working with the engineer of their debut album, they set about salvaging the sessions the best they could, stripping things back to bare essentials. *Seriouslessness*, featuring backing vocals from Madeline Bell, stands up as a strong bluesy rock album, not far removed from what acts like Lenny Kravitz were doing. Dressed in suits once again, this time designer ones from Paris, The Creeps made more TV appearances on the back of the album. Sadly, it was to be their last for WEA. *Blue Tomato* had sold over a quarter of a million, but *Seriouslessness*, released in '93, sold 40,000, which just wasn't enough to satisfy a major label who expected more from their hit band. Robert also badly fell out with Gray and cancelled the managerial contract, taking over and running things himself. *Mr Freedom Now!* was recorded in Malmo, again with Lindholm, and released in '96 on Lund, a Polygram subsidiary that lasted only a year. In the writer and singer's words, "It was all over the place, but a much more interesting album." A soundtrack for a children's film followed. By '97 The Creeps were no more, reforming a couple of times in the new millennium to, you guessed it, play material from the debut for their original audience.

Few bands have made the transition from the garage revival to the pop charts. Imagine what may have happened if they had broken Britain and the States? "Robert was the star. He *is* the star!" chimes in Anders. "Where he went. We followed. What a trip!" closes Patrick. S!

ALL FOR ART... AND ART FOR ALL!

"It honestly felt like some kind of voodoo magic." The Soup Dragons in 1987. L-R: Sean Dickson, Ross Sinclair, Sushil Dade and Jim McCulloch

FUZZY GUITARS, POUNDING DRUMS AND A RUSH OF ENTHUSIASTIC VOCAL EXHORTATIONS INTRODUCED THE WORLD TO GLASGOW QUARTET THE SOUP DRAGONS. THEIR SONGS WERE A POTENT REMINDER OF THE FUN, INNOCENCE AND CHAOTIC COMPLEXITY OF MODERN LIFE IN THE MID-80S. INSPIRATION WAS INITIALLY DRAWN FROM *NUGGETS*-ERA GARAGE AND PSYCHEDELIA AND LATE '70S PUNK/NEW-WAVE BUT THEY CONSTANTLY FINE-TUNED THEIR SOUND, STRIVING TO CREATE SOMETHING OF THEIR OWN. LENNY HELSING WAS RIGHT THERE IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

As The Soup Dragons began their ascent, various other groups within the UK's anorak or C86 scene echoed similar characteristics. However, for many, the propulsive rhythms, strong melodies and intriguing lyrical content they served up proved more compelling. Their surplus of punk-pop hooks aligned with a playful and appealing visual image, reflected a life-affirming, devil-may-care spirit. The cascade of infectious singles – among them 'Whole Wide World', 'Hang Ten' and 'Can't Take No More' – soon caused the ripples, already happening in certain circles, to spread outward; their reach positively impacted the group's public profile and future record sales. As a new decade loomed, the shape-shifting Soup Dragons busied themselves creating fresh, new sounds which would help pave the way for the indie scene's full-blown infiltration into the mainstream.

Originating from different towns on the outskirts of Glasgow – and named after the creatures in Oliver Postgate's iconic late '60s TV show *The Clangers* – The Soup Dragons came together during a new post-Fast and Postcard labels uprising during the mid-80s. This musical revolution had already spawned The Pastels, Shop Assistants, The Jesus & Mary Chain and others. The Lanarkshire town of Bellshill proved a popular breeding ground, birthing many future Glasgow names in addition to The Soup Dragons, such as BMX Bandits, The Boy Hairdressers (future Teenage Fanclub), The Vaselines and Superstar.

Once The Soup Dragons' line-up was established, a demo tape was recorded, with one song pressed up on a flexi-disc and given away with Issue #3 of *Pure Popcorn*, the fanzine created by their bass player Sushil Dade. Completing the group were Ross Sinclair (drums), Jim McCulloch (guitar) and Sean Dickson (vocalist, guitarist and chief songwriter).

After creating a buzz with their September '85 live debut at Splash One, the Glasgow club night run by Bobby Gillespie (then playing drums with The Jesus & Mary Chain, and fronting the embryonic Primal Scream), the group's spiky, frenetic punk-pop concoctions soon blared out from stages across the city and beyond. Following *New Musical Express*'s rave review of their punk-sounding flexi-disc 'If You Were The Only Girl In The World Would You Take Me?' – the song was played on Radio One's John Peel programme. As Sean explains, this led to a fortuitous meeting with Peel himself. "I will always remember this happening as a 17-year-old layabout lying in his bedroom one afternoon whilst still staying at home. 'Sean, answer the phone,' screamed my mum, I of course played dumb that I could not hear it to let her answer it. She then shouts up the stairs, 'Someone from the BBC called John Peel is on the

Sean on stage in 1986; early gig flyers with your correspondent providing the support; split flexi and first two singles; promo shot

phone for you.' WTF? I actually flew down those stairs to the phone by the front door of our Bellshill council house. 'Hello, Sean, this is John Peel's producer, and we heard your flexi disc' (the only thing we had released by that point and given single of the week by *NME*. Another WTF?). We would like to get you down to do a session for John's show.' 'Oh, we don't have any money to get down there,' I blurt out. 'Let me call you back then,' she says. Great, I blew that one! About 15 minutes later the phone rings; this time I was sitting on the landing stairs waiting. 'Hi,' I happily say. 'Hi, it's John's producer again, I just spoke with him, and he asked if you can go meet him next Saturday at Queen Margaret Uni where he is DJ-ing.' 'Of course,' I say and put the phone down only to ring up each of the other guys to tell them this insane news.

"Anyway, the next Saturday I stroll into the Uni in the West End of Glasgow and walk up to the DJ booth and say 'Hi, John, I am Sean from The Soup Dragons.' He's really friendly and says, 'Hey I got something for you.' He then puts his hand into his right pocket and pulls out some notes. 'Here is £150 and it's for you guys to get down to London and record me a session at BBC Maida Vale studios.' 'I can't take this,' I say… 'But you are,' he says, 'and one day you will pay me back,' laughing his head off. Well to cut a very long story short, he would never take it back. I even tried to hide it down the side of his old Volvo estate one day when he was up in Glasgow again filming and [he] shouted, 'Oi, Sean, I can see now, get that out the side of my car's seat.' I miss that man so much and have so much gratitude for everything he did for us. He became a good friend and even in The High Fidelity days (the band I had after the Soups that no one ever seems to remember), he really supported us and even wrote a song on one of our albums.

"One day he said something to me around his kitchen table which, from that moment, it blew my mind and I literally think about every day of my life. I asked him casually, 'What is it that keeps you going, John, and listening to so much new music all the time?' He looked me dead in the eyes and said 'Sean, one day the next record I hear may be the best record I have ever heard.' Boom. Amen."

During those early days, The Soup Dragons had boundless creativity, trying out new songs at every rehearsal. They also wasted no time in getting back into the studio, ensuring some of that abundance of material was captured on tape. With gigs becoming more frequent, their fanbase soon grew exponentially.

"I have so many great memories of some of those early gigs," recalls Sushil. "Our very first show was supporting Primal Scream at the legendary Splash One club in Glasgow, and for our second gig we were invited by The Pastels to open for them in the exotic location of Carlisle at The Stars 'n' Stripes Club. Great memories of Stephen Pastel helping with the amps and the load-in and even name-checking our band in one of their songs that night... that was a special thrill! Another lovely memory around the time of recording 'Hang Ten', our second single, was playing at Bay 63... in the space of a few days we'd met psychedelic heroes from both sides of the Atlantic including Daniel Treacy from The TV Personalities, Robyn Hitchcock from The Soft Boys, and we even had Red Krayola's Mayo Thompson introduce us on to the stage one night. We also slept on so many people's floors during our early days, including with 'The Legend, Dan Treacy', and always remember staying with John Robb, staying up till the small hours with endless pots of tea, rounds of toast and good banter. Simple pleasures before the advent of the internet, mobile phone and the world's obsession with social media. Those were special times..."

Ross Sinclair, the drummer, reflects on the group's embryonic phase. "Like most bands, I suppose," he says, "with The

Showing off some fine knitwear; growing up for *This Is Our Art* cover shoot, 1988

"OUR VERY FIRST SHOW WAS SUPPORTING *PRIMAL SCREAM* AT THE LEGENDARY SPLASH ONE CLUB IN GLASGOW, AND FOR OUR SECOND GIG WE WERE INVITED BY *THE PASTELS* TO OPEN FOR THEM IN THE EXOTIC LOCATION OF CARLISLE AT THE STARS 'N' STRIPES CLUB"
SUSHIL DADE

Soup Dragons there was some false starts at the beginning, with a few different folk coming in and out as the sound and the line-up came together. We had a lovely guy called Iain Whitehall on guitar at first, who was great and had his own band Jacuzzis For Bears. We'd been rehearsing for a while and sounding pretty good when Bobby Gillespie happened into Flip one day where Sean was working and asked him if we wanted to support Primal Scream at their upcoming Splash 1 gig. This was great but it turned out Iain was away on holiday and couldn't do the gig. A shame.

"Cue Jim McCulloch, great guitar player, clarinet supremo and all-round good guy. The first rehearsal we had with Jim I remember thinking that something had clicked, something changed, and it suddenly felt like this was it, this was the sound, this was the line-up. I had been standing up doing a sort of Mary Chain drumming thing, but I finally sat down, and things got much tighter. All the amazing songs that Sean would bring into each rehearsal came to life, fell into place and felt like they'd always been this way. It honestly felt like some kind of voodoo magic.

"So that Sunday, at Splash 1, we nervously climbed up on that tiny stage and BOOM! We were off. Noise, pogo-ing, mayhem! The gig flew past in an instant. I think the Primals were a bit shocked at how well we'd gone down. They were still deep in their jangle phase, which I loved, but we sounded like an amped-up demented teenage Glaswegian Buzzcocks noise fest and actually managed to induce a couple of stage divers into action (actually two of Sushil's pals). This gig was amazing and immediately cemented the band together. After that, things happened really quickly, going from strength to strength."

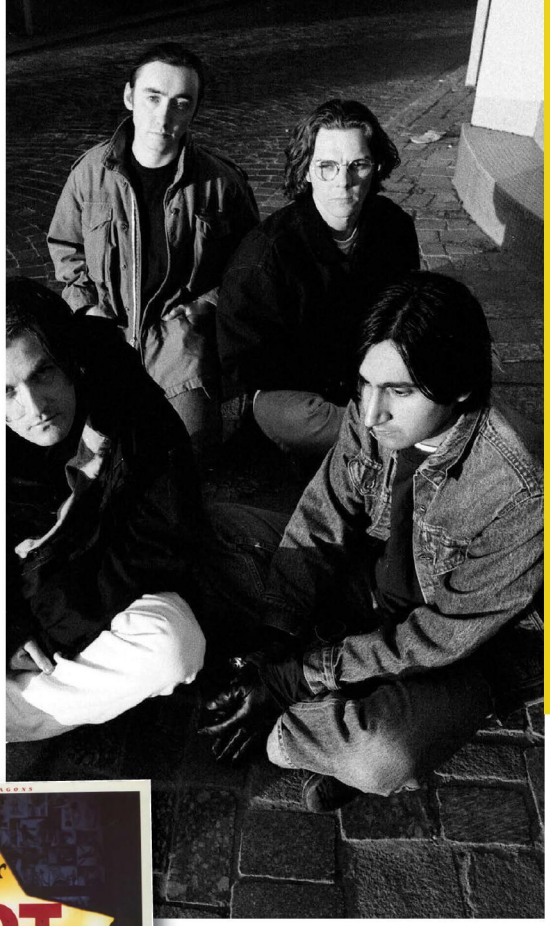
'Whole Wide World' was the first proper Soup Dragons single, a brief, yet expressive pop-punk whirlwind, but their controversial *The Sun Is In The Sky* EP was also issued around the same time. Both were issued by Bristol label The Subway Organization, but the group were unhappy with the EP release. "Yes, we weren't happy with the cut," says Sushil. "It sounded rough, so we didn't approve. However, apparently copies were being sold behind our back... I designed the sleeve, a prototype of what would become the 'Whole Wide World' sleeve."

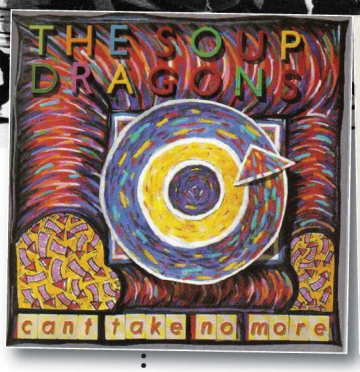
Images of the group began appearing in fanzines and music papers, their happy, smiling faces and natty apparel – zany patterned jumpers, stripy shirts and cardigans – delighting the anorak-and-badge wearing shamblers now popping up across the UK.

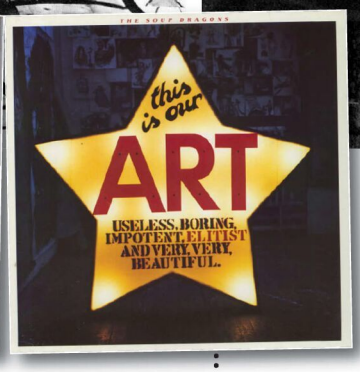
Before long the group landed a management deal, coming to an agreement with Tim Parry and former Wham manager Jazz Summers. "In '86," Sean recollects, "when we released 'Whole Wide World', I got a call from Tim Parry and Jazz Summers. (For the record I still work with Tim to this day and have done all those years; sadly, Jazz died of cancer a few years ago.) We were playing a gig in London and were asked to pop by their office. I remember being told Jazz used to co-manage Wham and we thought it hilarious that someone like him wanted to meet us. I went along and at first it was a short kinda chat and then I said, 'Oh, I got the video for our current single 'Whole Wide World' that we just made for £50 in someone's office in Edinburgh, round the corner from Fast offices that Sandy (McLean) put us in touch with.' It literally got to the first chorus when Jazz slammed his hand on the table – like he did a lot – and said, 'Fuck, I want to manage you guys and give you your own record label, and we will market that for you too.' I said, 'Can we think about it?' The next day we agreed.

"No contract or anything, just word of mouth and it was like that till 'I'm Free' went Top 20. Jazz was like, 'Shit, we need to make a contract up' (five years later) to which we signed. Funny thing is, Lisa Stansfield, who he managed too, made him a t-shirt to wear that day that said, 'I knew The Soup Dragons before they were famous.'"

Dedicated solely to putting out the group's own records, the Raw TV Products label was soon established. "When we started raw TV there was no Big Life," says Sean. "In fact, I think Jazz's business was just called Society, hence why some of those early singles say marketed by Society. It was all distributed by Rough Trade. Then we met Seymour Stein and he wanted to release those early raw TV singles in the USA as a comp called *Hang Ten*. Through that we ended up signing to them for the *This Is Our Art* album. Whilst all that was going on Jazz and Tim, who still managed us, started Big Life Records which became a big underground dance label very quickly. After *This Is Our Art* we were dropped by Sire, which I don't blame them for as I







Getting ready for the big time; Paul Quinn (second right) joins in 1989; '87 single and '88's debut album *This Is Our Art*

really did not know how to write albums, just cracking singles. That craft came with my 20s. So we went back to releasing cracking singles on Big Life. Later came 'I'm Free' and THEN we had to sign a deal which was partly owned by Mercury in USA who released both *Lovegod* and *Hotwired* albums."

As The Soup Dragons' discography continued to expand, new releases were now accompanied by television appearances. The hurtling 'Hang Ten' video was particularly memorable, highlighting the song's infectious feel and rousing Undertones-like backing vocals. 'Head Gone Astray', a quirkily cool affair, was less instantly melodic, but had the added attraction of Jim's tremendous Byrdsy-sounding 12-string. As '87 got under way, the arrival of 'Can't Take No More' heralded another bubbling, adrenaline-driven pop jolt, which romped to the top of the indie chart. Almost as popular, the slower-paced, gentler 'Soft As Your Face' featured subtle strings.

Although the records and tours were well received, the champagne wasn't flowing freely quite yet, as Jim recollects. "Scenario #1: on tour in '87 with support band My Bloody Valentine. They had even less money than we did and couldn't afford hotel rooms for the night. We used to sneak them into our hotels every night so they could use the showers and sleep on the floor. Oh, the glamour! Scenario #2: playing a show in Hamburg … We had a set list of seven songs, maximum length of song being perhaps two and a half minutes long. Contracted to play for one hour and 30 minutes for some reason. Not entirely sure how we pulled it off. There were a lot of VU-style sonic jams if I recall correctly. Nervous but exhilarating."

During the weather-testing autumn of '87, Edinburgh-based group The Thanes (with whom your humble scribe still plays) were invited to support The Soup Dragons on their October tour: an extensive trek which took in Manchester, Birmingham, Exeter, Bristol, Sheffield, Newcastle, Glasgow. On their day off after playing London's Town & Country Club – where we shared a dressing room with My Bloody Valentine – The Soup Dragons and crew came along to cheer us on at our own gig at The Assembly House, supported by The Aardvarks and The Hurtin' Kind. Throughout the tour they made sure we didn't die of thirst and let us snaffle the odd platter of sandwiches. Their roadies also rescued us when we broke down on the way to the gig in Port Talbot, Wales.

As the '80s drew to a close, the Soups veered towards heavier, more psychedelic-inspired sounds, as heard on 'The Majestic Head' and 'Kingdom Chairs' singles. Psychedelia wasn't unfamiliar to them given they'd already participated (alongside pre-Thanes group The Green Telescope) on Imaginary Records' *Beyond The Wildwood: A Tribute To Syd Barrett* compilation; their contribution a charmingly buoyant version of Syd's magical 'Two Of A Kind'. "I was already a fan of The Chocolate Watchband and had a few Bam Caruso compilations," affirms Jim. "The Action were my favourite band with The Creation a close second around '84/85. I blame Edsel, myself! I think everyone in the band had an interest in this music as we could hear the connections to punk a decade later and the DIY ethos that surrounded it."

Before the new decade dawned, their sound was further updated, with samplers and elements of dub-reggae now in the mix. A major change occurred when drummer and co-founder Ross Sinclair left the group to resume his studies at Glasgow School Of Art. "My memory was that we got Paul Quinn to do the late '89 tour as a sort of session guy," says Ross, "and I was going back to GSA but still thinking, could I do both?" He adds that "I actually worked on the tracks for the *Lovegod* album, playing cymbals and live percussion over the programming that I did with Sean."

In a recent blog post, 'The Year Is 1990', the album's engineer and co-producer George Shilling considers the

"*THE ACTION* WERE MY FAVOURITE BAND WITH *THE CREATION* A CLOSE SECOND AROUND 1984/85. I THINK EVERYONE IN THE BAND HAD AN INTEREST IN THIS MUSIC AS WE COULD HEAR THE CONNECTIONS TO PUNK A DECADE LATER AND THE DIY ETHOS THAT SURROUNDED IT"

JIM MCCULLOCH

group in the vanguard of the indie-rock/electronic dance crossover. "The record was finished," he writes, "but the Soups were unhappy with the results, which sounded fairly unadventurous. Frontman Sean Dickson had other (brilliant) ideas – there had been a ground-breaking downtempo dance remix of the band's 'Mother Universe' the previous year which set something of a template. This was long before The Stone Roses released their debut album, and before Primal Scream had even met Andy Weatherall, despite many later accusations that The Soup Dragons jumped on their bandwagon."

Changes could also be detected in the choice of artwork used on their record sleeves; vivid, solar-hued images adorned the 'Backwards Dog' and 'Crotch Deep Trash' singles. Soon, promotional posters and videos would introduce bold, fractal-imbued designs, further indicating the transition into a more dance-friendly realm.

By the summer of '90, everyone seemed to know who The Soup Dragons were, as their loose-limbed, celebratory cover of overlooked Rolling Stones '65 album cut 'I'm Free' floated into the UK Top 10, charting across Europe, in Australia and the USA. This writer has often wondered why they chose to record 'I'm Free'. "Ooh, good question that," Jim responds when asked about it. "We were probably all aware of it from the *Out Of Our Heads* album, but I don't think it registered as it's a pretty run of the mill, almost throwaway performance from the band. I remember us rehearsing in Glasgow and *The Stones In Hyde Park* had been on the telly the night before. We'd been chatting about it then and we were looking for a new cover version for our live set… so I'm not sure who's to blame! I think the fact that we decided to actually record it rather than just play it at gigs was very significant though!"

Although outside our current remit, The Soup Dragons continued for a few more years. In '92 their *Hotwired* album rewarded them with another US chart hit with the guitar-driven 'Divine Thing'.

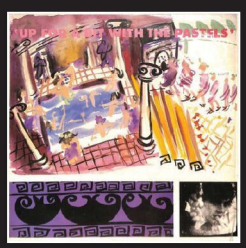
Fast forward and the end of 2022 sees the release of the superb *John Peel Sessions* and *Janice Long Sessions* EPs on the Precious Recordings Of London label, and the band-collated *Raw TV Products: Singles & Rarities 1985-88* compilation issued by Last Night In Glasgow. Now, there's been an official announcement that The Soup Dragons are back! The original line-up will embark on a nationwide tour during October and November 2023. Plans for brand new recordings are also underway. S!

With grateful thanks to: The Soup Dragons, Izzy McHardy (Last Night From Glasgow), Nick Godfrey (Precious Recordings Of London), George Shilling, Noah Montgomery and Dave Watson

CARDIGANS AND FRINGES

Shindig! offers a taster of some great tartan-hued bands to come out of Scotland at this time

THE PASTELS



Formed in Glasgow in 1981, The Pastels were born in the shadow of Alan Horne's Postcard Records as Brian Taylor (Horne's pal) joined forces with Stephen McRobbie aka Steve Pastel. Despite a cluster of failed singles via Rough Trade, Creation and Glass, their debut album *Up For A Bit With The Pastels* was a critical success – it just didn't do very much commercially. Then, in '89 Katrina Mitchell joined, and with some backing from their Teenage Fanclub and Shop Assistants buddies, The Pastels' delicate and melodic psych-Velvets persona was set. They're still going today, and their fifth studio album *Slow Summits* was released a decade ago.

THE FIRE ENGINES

Hailing from Edinburgh, The Fire Engines were post-punk in the truest sense. With a name taken from The 13th Floor Elevators, they boasted an aggressive and insistent sound; jagged, discordant guitar and a Tom Verlaine-style vocal belying their true Bowery influences. Launching themselves with the self-released 'Get Up and Use Me', they rejected Postcard for the more apt Fast Product records. But on the eve of their first US tour, with just *Lubricate Your Living Room* – a compilation of singles and mini-LPs – under their belt, The Fire Engines disappeared as quickly as they appeared… resurfacing more than 20 years later after much persuasion.

CLOSE LOBSTERS

From mid-80s Paisley, indie popstars Close Lobsters were one of the Fire label's earliest signings. Drawing on The Smiths and Orange Juice, the Lobsters delivered their own brand of frenetic yet euphoric jangle-guitar pop. Hitting the ground running, their first single 'Going To Heaven To See If It Rains' captured the zeitgeist just perfectly, with 1987's highly-regarded debut long-player *Foxheads Stalk This Land* (overseen by Felt and Pastels producer John A Rivers) following soon after. The band started to gain a foothold on US college radio and received plaudits in the pages of *Rolling Stone*, but rather than building on this success, they split after the release of their sophomore album *Headache Rhetoric*.

SHOP ASSISTANTS

Another Scottish band that burnt brightly for a moment was the Edinburgh-based Shop Assistants. Their early line-up featured vocalist Aggi who was swiftly lured away to join The Pastels. With Karen Parker and then Alex Taylor on vocals, the predominantly female band released their lush, dream-pop LP *Shop Assistants* on the Blue Guitar label in 1986, featuring 'All Day Long'. Morrissey's choice as '85 single of the year. The band were a favourite of John Peel and even signed to Chrysalis but split in '87 and again in '90 when they went their separate ways for good.

JOSEF K

Alongside Orange Juice, Josef K were one of the Postcard label's key signings – a bunch of post-punkers who reflected the darker side of the label. The band formed in 1979, and basked in the shadow of American new-wave and British punk, their frantic and choppy guitar channelling Devo, Pere Ubu and Subway Sect. Their early single releases drew critical attention, but their first attempt at an album in '81 was shelved – the band was unhappy with its sound. Taking a more direct, live approach, *The Only Fun In Town* was released later that same year, but they weren't especially pleased with it either. They split in '82 but the members continued to embed themselves in the Scottish music scene.

Sarah Gregory

THE CRYING GAME

ATTEMPTING TO JUGGLE MAINSTREAM POP SUCCESS, GRAND ARTISTIC VISIONS AND PSYCHEDELIC EXCESS, THE TEARDROP EXPLODES WERE DESTINED TO BECOME THE DOOMED ROMANTIC HEROES OF THE POST-PUNK ERA. ON THE RELEASE OF A LAVISH, CAREER-SPANNING BOX SET, BEN GRAHAM TALKS TO FORMER MEMBERS DAVE BALFE, MICK FINKLER AND PAUL SIMPSON ABOUT FRIENDSHIPS, FAILURE AND WHY IT'S FINALLY TIME FOR THE TEARDROP EXPLODES TO ACCEPT THEIR REWARD

PURVEYORS OF PEBBLES

'80S POST-PUNK, PSYCH, GARAGE & WEIRD INDIE

The Teardrop Explodes during the *Kilimanjaro* cover shoot, 1982. L-R: Dave Balfe, Alan Gill, Gary Dwyer, Julian Cope

Mick Finckler, Cope and Dwyer in 1979

It's the week before Christmas 1981, and The Teardrop Explodes are midway through an extended performance of 'Sleeping Gas', their debut single and reliably transcendent live closer, barely recognisable from the lo-fi psychedelia of two years' before. As drummer Gary Dwyer and new bassist Ronnie François build on the motorik disco rhythms that the recorded version only hinted at, singer Julian Cope goes into a freestyle rap, performing "face solos" for the benefit of an audience that is partly bewildered, partly ecstatic and, it has to be said, also somewhat sparse.

At the end of '81, the Teardrops should have been on top of the world. Over the previous 12 months, they'd rarely been out of the music press, from *NME* and *Melody Maker* to *Smash Hits* and *Oh Boy!* Julian Cope had gone from nerdy indie outsider to pop-star pin-up and post-punk cult hero, his shaggy Scott Walker bowl cut and WWII flying jacket making him a credible but equally glamorous alternative to New Romantics like Duran Duran and Spandau Ballet.

But the year that began with their fifth single 'Reward' crashing into the Top 10 had ended with single number eight, 'Colours Fly Away', stalling at #54. Worse, their second album, the much-anticipated *Wilder,* which Mercury Records had announced as their big end-of-year release, had met with luke-warm reviews and had also flopped. According to Cope's *Head On* memoir, 50,000 of the 120,000 copies sent out to retailers were returned as the album dropped out of the Top 100 within three weeks.

Now, at the behest of manager Bill Drummond, the Teardrops were playing a four-week residency at a 400-capacity nightclub in Liverpool, when by rights they should've been touring the nation's larger theatres and halls. With the obscure Pyramid Club rechristened Club Zoo for the duration, the residency was an admirable if misguided attempt to turn the Teardrops from Julian Cope and a dysfunctional backing group back into a working band. But the barely promoted shows were met with confusion and suspicion. No matter that the band were tighter than ever and playing some of the best sets of their career; the club was generally less than three-quarters full, and, in the case of a matinee show attended by publicist Mick Houghton, the Teardrops literally found themselves playing to the proverbial two men and a dog.

How had it come to this, just three years after The Teardrop Explodes' debut gig at the now-defunct Eric's, its Mathew Street location less than five minutes' walk from The Pyramid Club? Club Zoo was arguably a doomed attempt to recreate those halcyon days at Eric's, when Liverpool's young punks quickly evolved a unique and varied aesthetic all their own. The scene at Eric's spawned not only The Teardrop Explodes but also friends and rivals Echo & The Bunnymen, Pete Wylie's Wah!, Paul Simpson and The Wild Swans and, eventually, chart-topping acts like Frankie Goes To Hollywood, Dead Or Alive, The KLF and The Lightning Seeds.

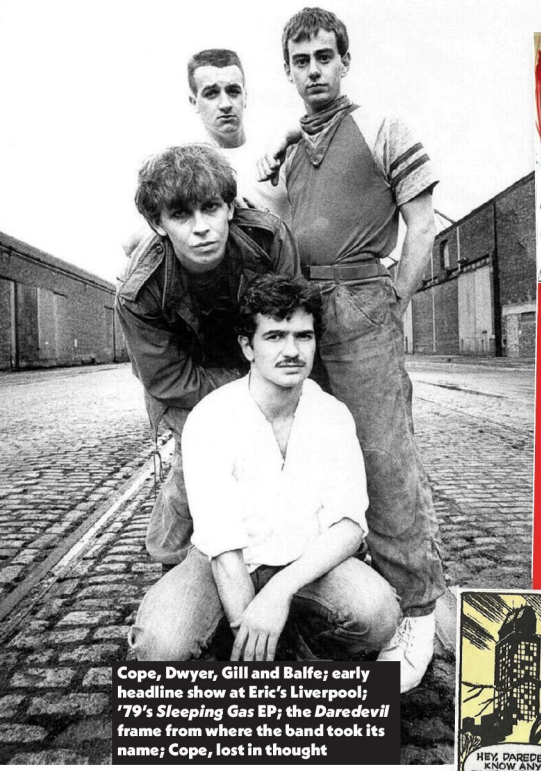
Julian David Cope arrived in Liverpool in September '76, enrolling at C.F. Mott Teacher Training College, some 12 miles outside the city. Born in rural Wales, he grew up in Tamworth, Staffordshire, where he combated his middle-class inhibitions and anxieties by embracing his inner weird. Despite high academic expectations, Cope preferred listening to The Doors, The Velvet Underground, The Stooges, Captain Beefheart, Can and Faust to studying for his A-levels. This resulted in his further education posting to the provinces rather than the expected Oxbridge acceptance.

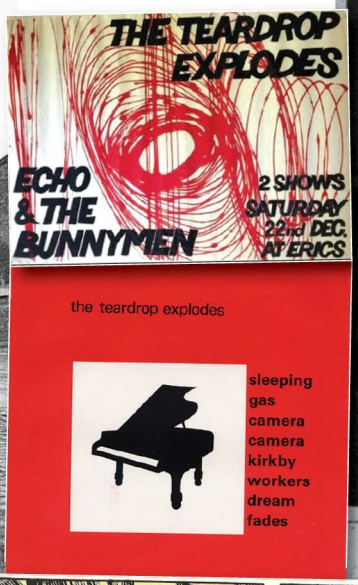
In Liverpool, Cope was an instant punk convert. Patti Smith, Television, and especially Pere Ubu became his new heroes, while his love of '60s garage-punk bands such as The Seeds and The 13th Floor Elevators deepened. He first made his way to Eric's in January '77, to see The Damned, but it was a 5th May performance by The Clash where the future movers and shakers of the Liverpool scene all first met.

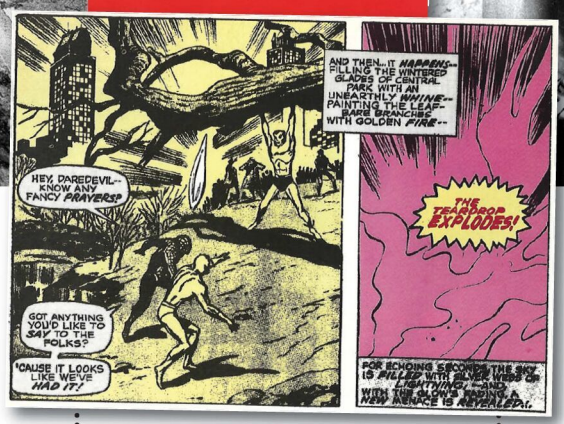
"Eric's was almost like a punk youth club," remembers Mick Finkler, who was 16 in '77. "It was a musical education. Roger Eagle the deejay turned you on to all sorts of stuff you wouldn't have heard before. It wasn't just a place you went to see bands. It was a whole holistic experience."

"Julian came back to Liverpool after he'd been away from teacher training college, dressed like a by-the-yard punk," recalls Paul Simpson. "And the rest of us had got bored with punk very quickly in Eric's. No one bought *Never Mind The Bollocks,* we were all bored with it by then. We'd moved on musically and sartorially. So, I was a bit like, 'Oh god, who's this guy?' And I could see him looking at me like, 'Oh god, who's this posing wanker?' But he just immediately started enthusing about how great everything was, and I immediately started bitching about the things that were spoiling the scene as I saw it. He was so positive, and I was very negative, but that combo worked."

Then followed a period of short-lived or purely imaginary groups. The Crucial Three, with Pete Wylie on guitar, Cope on bass and Ian McCulloch on mumbled vocals lasted for one rehearsal. Mystery Girls (Wylie, Cope, and singer Pete Burns) opened for Sham 69 at Eric's in October, playing '60s garage covers, while The Nova Mob (Wylie and Cope plus Griff and Budgie from Liverpool's only







Cope, Dwyer, Gill and Balfe; early headline show at Eric's Liverpool; '79's *Sleeping Gas* EP; the *Daredevil* frame from where the band took its name; Cope, lost in thought

conventional punk band, The Spitfire Boys) played a one-off gig at Eric's in early '78. All four chanted "We're in love with beauty, we're in love with wealth, we're in love with mental health" for 15 minutes.

By spring '78, however, Cope and Paul Simpson had a more serious musical collaboration underway. Ian 'Mac' McCulloch joined on vocals and brought along his friend Dave Pickett on drums. Originally called Uh? after Pickett's favourite phrase, they soon became A Shallow Madness, and added Mick Finkler on guitar.

"Mac would never turn up, or very rarely, and when he did, he hadn't worked on any of the songs that we'd written," says Paul Simpson. "So we sacked Mac, and we didn't have a singer. Mick and I were seriously thinking, who can we get to sing? And then Julian said, I could do it. And me and Mick Finkler were like a comedy duo, but we also saw ourselves as Julian's brakes, like his bike brakes just because he was so enthusiastic. He would sometimes have an idea that wasn't cool. And we used to adopt what was a Mac expression, which was 'Think again', meaning that's not gonna fly, you know. And we were like, think again. There's no way. And he was quite offended. He looked quite hurt, and he had this petulant face on, you know, 'At least I'm having a go.' And so, he did, and he started bringing words in and stuff."

Cope also asked Gary Dwyer to replace Dave Pickett on drums, while Paul Simpson came up with a new name. "I was so bored at the meeting that we were having to discuss our band name, which was in my bedsit in Rodney Street," he says. "I just picked up a *Daredevil* comic that had been left behind by the previous tenant of the house. I was idly reading it, and this caption read 'Over a glade in Central Park, the Teardrop Explodes!' It was less a suggestion, more, isn't this weird? But Julian was just like, 'Oh my God, that's psychedelic genius!'"

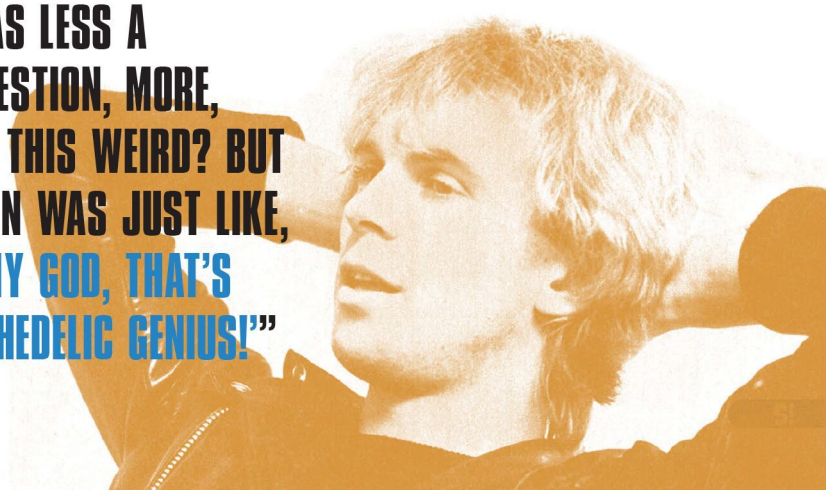
The Teardrop Explodes first appeared in public on 15th November, invited by Candy James, Cope's best friend at Mott, to play at Eric's for her birthday party. Ian McCulloch's new band Echo & The Bunnymen supported.

"I was terrified," Paul Simpson remembers. "All our friends and girlfriends were watching, and all the other bands were in the room. And we still hadn't really heard Julian sing. He sang the first song in Russian, because he'd studied Russian at school, and we asked him afterwards what it was about. It was about a farmer chasing a rabbit out of the field with a shotgun! But he stood like a front man, and I thought, 'Okay, alright.' And that's how he became the singer."

Meanwhile, one of the brightest hopes of the new Liverpool scene, Big In Japan,

continues on page 62...

"I JUST PICKED UP A DAREDEVIL COMIC THAT HAD BEEN LEFT BEHIND BY THE PREVIOUS TENANT OF THE HOUSE. THIS CAPTION READ 'OVER A GLADE IN CENTRAL PARK, THE TEARDROP EXPLODES!' IT WAS LESS A SUGGESTION, MORE, ISN'T THIS WEIRD? BUT JULIAN WAS JUST LIKE, 'OH MY GOD, THAT'S PSYCHEDELIC GENIUS!'"



THE HUNCHBACKED TWILIGHT ZONE

ON 3RD DECEMBER 1983, AS JULIAN COPE WAS RECORDING HIS SOLO DEBUT *WORLD SHUT YOUR MOUTH* FOLLOWING THE MESSY DEMISE OF THE TEARDROP EXPLODES, *NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS* PUBLISHED A 4000-WORD MISSIVE ENTITLED 'TALES FROM THE DRUG ATTIC', IN WHICH THE SINGER ESPOUSED THE DELIGHTS OF THEN-OBSCURE '60S GARAGE AND PSYCHEDELIA. "FEW SOULS DARE TO WANDER THE MADCAP LANDSCAPE OF THE FORGOTTEN PSYCHEDELIC RELICS OF THE '60S," RAN THE HEADLINE, "THAT NO PERSON'S LAND BETWEEN SANITY AND OBLIVION. JULIAN COPE IS ONE OF THOSE FEARLESS FEW WHO KNOWS THAT WHO DARES, GRINS." ANDY MORTEN GETS INK ON HIS FINGERS

Julian Cope in 1983; the 3rd December *NME* containing his 'Tales From The Drug Attic' essay

Few, if any, mainstream music publications in 1983 offered opinions about cult '60s artefacts, but a revival of interest in the unsung heroes of the era meant that bootlegs were becoming common currency among a knowing handful of thrill-hungry teens, cliquey club-goers and grizzled scholars. There were new bands, and clubs, and fanzines, and scenes – hell, some of these people even knew who The Moving Sidewalks were.

The Teardrop Explodes' own fondness for hallucinogenic drugs was hardly a secret, but in the year or so since their disintegration, Cope had become an acid zealot, seeking artistic and personal

Selections from Cope's garage and psych love-list

freedom in its illicit altered states. That he was afforded pages in a weekly inkie to proselytise on his *Nuggets*-adjacent agenda proved a relevation to many. With his customary caustic wit and a critical naivety now lost to 40 years of hagiographic, matter-of-fact, legitimised reissues and anthologies (see *S!* issues 138 and 139 for more on this), Cope attempts to turn the readers on to the arcane wonders of major players like The Seeds and 13th Floor Elevators, and comparative obscuros like The Calico Wall and The Blue Things, despite that readervx possibly having bought the paper for its Police cover story.

Following a self-reflective opening section in which he dismisses sex ("repulsive") and pins his entire *raison d'etre* on "your first psychedelic experience", Cope proceeds to slay sacred cows from The Grateful Dead and Quicksilver ("mid-20s graduates intent on rationalising the scene") to Timothy Leary and Tom Wolfe ("all the Peace-Love-Dove shit") before defining the true nature of US garage-rock: "The 17-year-old kids from Birmingham to Albuquerque who took acid and tried to play old Van Morrison/ Stones riffs. In their hunchbacked Twilight Zone, they made the best, most formidable sound ever." He nails the garage band frontman archetype with startling vividness: "The singer in every great psychedelic group was 5' 10". He stooped because his friends were small and he felt like a spaz. He sung about being himself, his ideal self, which was really Mick Jagger. His real life was a dry-wank."

Nuggets is the blue touchpaper for everything here; the inescapable fountain from which all knowledge was dispersed to those too young or too far away to have been there. But there are also "the parallels strewn out in front of me" – Patti Smith, Marc Almond, Peter Hammill – all of whom Cope loves too. "The small want-to-be-big individual who tore out great handfuls of his soul for a promise of a no-meaning 15 minutes of fame." The spirit lives on – Cope knows this as he's channelling it himself.

UK psychedelia is addressed in a less fevered tone, befitting the nature of the music. Syd's Floyd, *Revolver* and Traffic are deemed "the basics"; only The Creation warrant their own entry. "It's hard to separate the good from the shit," he writes. "Psychedelia here became a style. Every group had a rainbow-abstract-world-in-my-head sleeve."

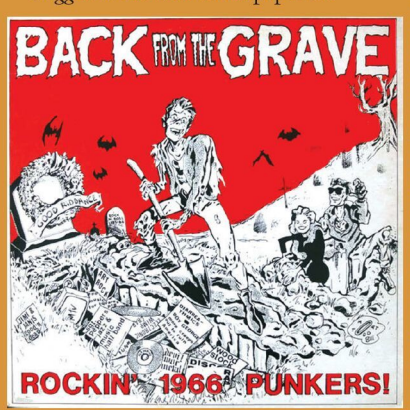
There follows a lightning-fast, hyperactive breakdown of the compilation series scene, with under-the-counter fare like *Psychedelic Unknowns*, *Texas Flashback* and *Psychotic Moose And The Soul Searchers* (remember that one?) vying with *Back From The Grave* (then just two volumes in released by a "maniac" who "spends his time driving a hired car around the mid-west of America in search of gems") for the top spot. There are cautionary words about UK label Psycho Records: "A weird conglomerate of classic and bad. *Endless Journey Phase One* is dirty and brilliantly fucked up whilst *Phase Two* is failed Mellotron groups who would have killed for a Roger Dean sleeve." Sorry, CA Quintet – you just didn't cut it.

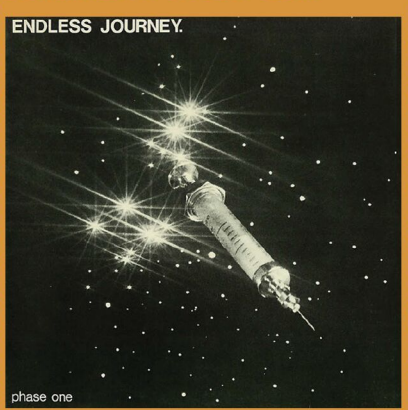
It's fun to think what Cope would have dreamed up had he been tasked with curating his own compilation at this time, applying his passion for the subject with the forensic details that would play out in his *Krautrocksampler*, *Japrocksampler* and *Copendium* books and *Head Heritage* website. Sadly, the industry that enables such celebrity follies was still in its infancy in '83. One suspects that nowadays he'd rather be doing something else anyway.

"I hate revivals of any kind so I hope the psychedelic revival has finally died down," Cope admits as he winds down the *NME* piece. "But one group that has to be mentioned is The Chesterfield Kings. Their LP could be from 1967, so close is it to the original. They only record the most obscure classics and are pure Chocolate Watchband." He signs off with a warning: "Don't Turn Hippy On Me."

With acknowledgments to whitetrashsoul.blogspot.com

"THE 17-YEAR-OLD KIDS FROM BIRMINGHAM TO ALBUQUERQUE WHO TOOK ACID AND TRIED TO PLAY OLD VAN MORRISON/ STONES RIFFS. IN THEIR HUNCHBACKED TWILIGHT ZONE, THEY MADE THE BEST, MOST FORMIDABLE SOUND EVER"





had just broken up. Led by guitarist, former art student and theatre set designer Bill Drummond, who was slightly older than most of the teenagers that frequented Eric's, and charismatic singer Jayne Casey, at various points Big In Japan also included guitarist Ian Broudie, former Spitfire Boys and future Siouxsie & The Banshees drummer Budgie, and bassist Holly Johnson. In the final days of the band Johnson was sacked and replaced by a young lad from the Wirral called Dave Balfe.

"Bill decided to pack in the band, and I was young and eager and pushy and just wandered around all of them saying 'What are you going to do next?'" Balfe remembers. "And Bill said, I was thinking of doing a record label. I said, 'That sounds great. I'll do it with you if you want.' And he said, 'Yeah, let's do it.'"

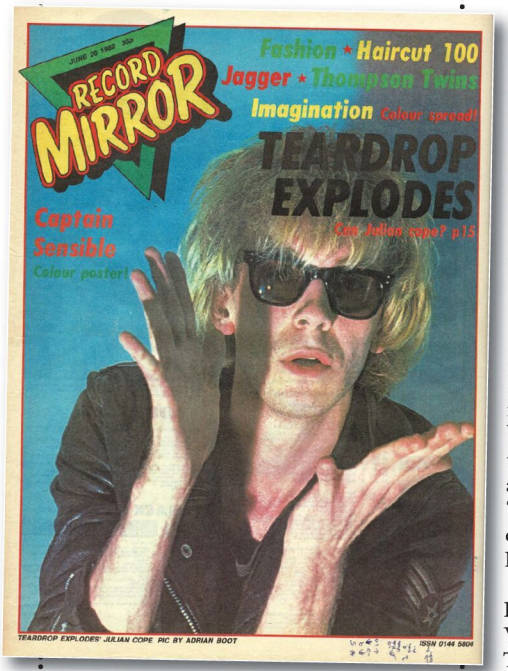
Balfe and Drummond saw the Teardrops at Eric and agreed to record them for the second release on their new Zoo label, after a Big In Japan farewell EP. 'Sleeping Gas', produced by Balfe, was released in February '79 to rave reviews, receiving 'Single Of The Week' in *Sounds*. The Teardrops were invited to play on Granada TV's *What's On* regional arts show, hosted by Factory Records' Tony Wilson, before playing what was only their third gig, supporting Wire at Eric's.

"We'd literally done two gigs before we recorded 'Sleeping Gas'," says Finkler. "And by the time we've done our third gig, we'd recorded the single, we've been on Granada TV, been on the radio, it was ridiculous. It was all very quick. And a lot of that was because of people like Bill Drummond, Roger Eagle and Dave Balfe. They just made things happen, just because they fancied doing it, really."

Paul Simpson, however, was already getting restless. "I didn't want to be a musician, I was going to be an artist," he says. "That was what I wanted to do. But Julian said, 'Come on, you can play keyboards.' So, I bought this 40 quid organ so we could get started. I was trying to be Brian Eno, but all I had was this organ with an on and off button. I was a bit surprised by how we started doing songs very early on.

"We did the *Sleeping Gas* EP, and during that session the trouble started because my keyboards were going a little bit out of time. And Dave Balfe kept stopping the tape and going, 'You're going out, Simmo, you're going out of time.' And I was like, 'It doesn't matter, who are we, 10cc?' I thought we were punks, you know? And it actually doesn't matter because during 'Sleeping Gas' I do go out of time, the offbeat becomes the on beat, but it's just part of the charm. That's what I thought we were doing. We weren't aiming for some sort of pop perfection. That was everything I thought we were fighting against."

Simpson, who later formed The Wild Swans, decided to leave as the band prepared to record their second single for Zoo, 'Bouncing Babies'. "Julian and I were walking through town, and he was talking with enthusiasm about going to the studio the next day. And I said, 'I'm dreading it. I'm not enjoying it anymore.' And because we thought so highly of each other, he was hurt. I didn't realise I was hurting him by saying that, but he said, well, why don't you leave then? And I went, 'Okay, I will.' I just kind of called his bluff."



"DESPITE HIGH ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS, COPE PREFERRED LISTENING TO THE DOORS, THE VELVET UNDERGROUND, THE STOOGES, CAPTAIN BEEFHEART, CAN AND FAUST TO STUDYING FOR HIS A-LEVELS, HENCE HIS FURTHER EDUCATION POSTING TO THE PROVINCES RATHER THAN THE EXPECTED OXBRIDGE ACCEPTANCE"

Dave Balfe stepped in on keyboards for a few gigs, before being replaced by Ged Quinn, who was ousted after a dozen or so shows and the band's first John Peel session. Balfe, by now also the band's manager, returned on keyboards, and the Teardrops travelled to London to record their third single 'Treason' with former Deaf School guitarist Clive Langer as producer. It was a major leap forward in terms of melodic songwriting, production and arrangement. The lyrics reflected Cope's feelings about the fact that Seymour Stein had signed Echo & The Bunnymen to his new Korova imprint but had turned down the Teardrops. As Balfe recalls, this was purely a question of money.

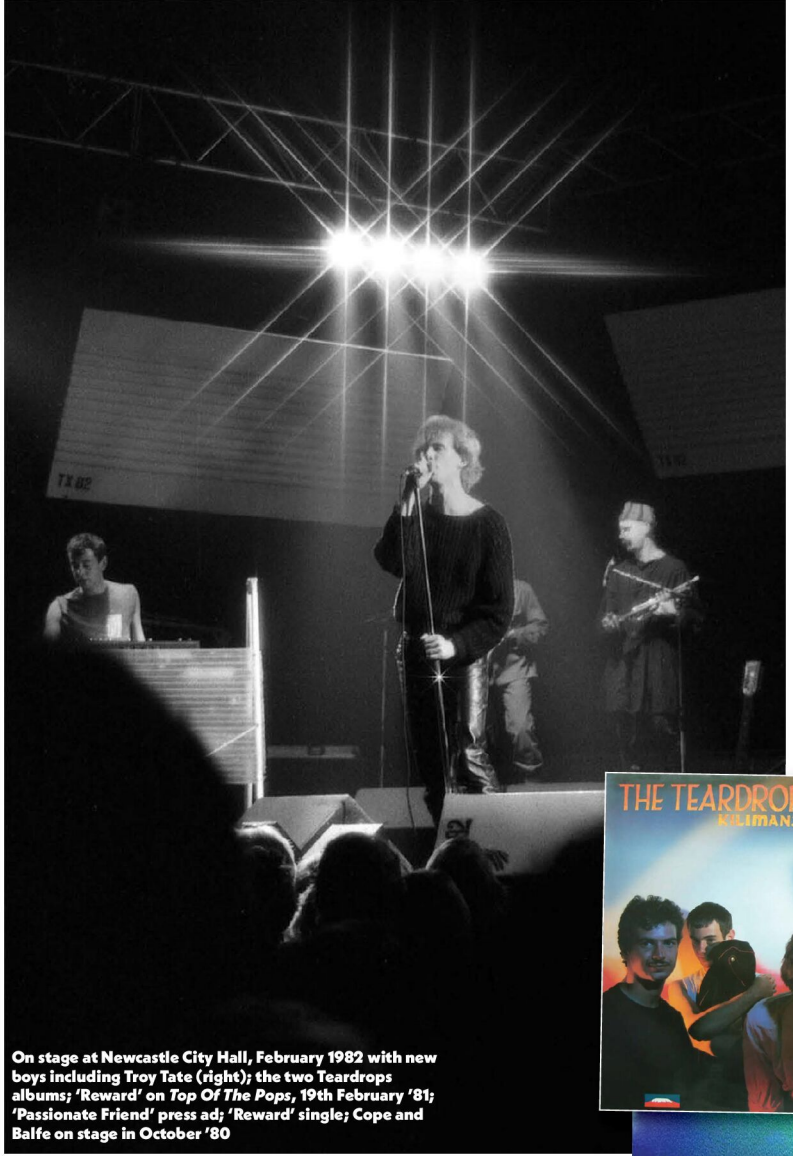
"He [Stein] had rung us up from New York and said he wanted to sign both bands to Sire, and we were incredibly excited. We said, this is the budget we want if you want to sign the bands. I think we wanted 30 grand an album for each band. And he goes, 'Well, I can't afford that. I'll sign one of them.' And he ended up signing the Bunnymen."

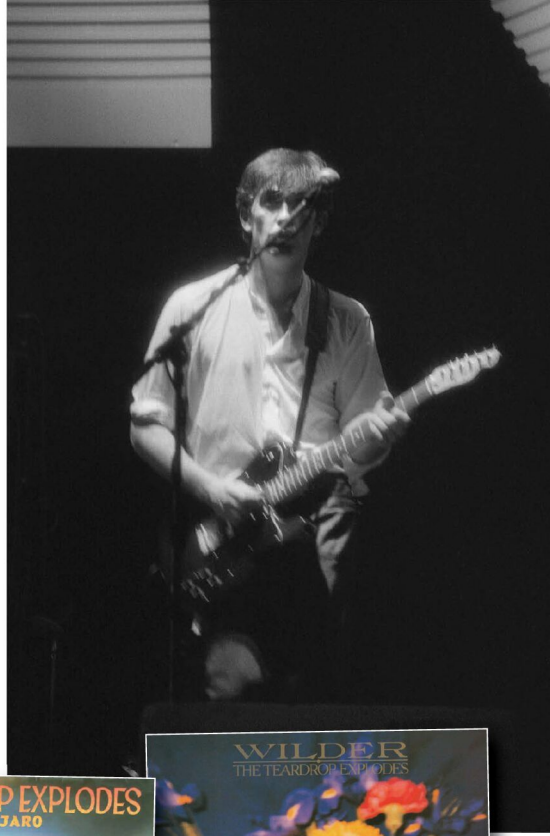
Despite this setback, Drummond and Balfe booked Rockfield Studios in Wales for both the Bunnymen and the Teardrops to record their debut albums back-to-back. But while the Bunnymen had major label money to pay the bills, the Teardrops were skint. *Kilimanjaro* came together over two weeks in March, as Mercury Records emerged as the frontrunner to sign the band. But the mounting tensions within the band needed an outlet, and in June '80, Mick Finkler was sacked, despite being Cope's principal writing partner.

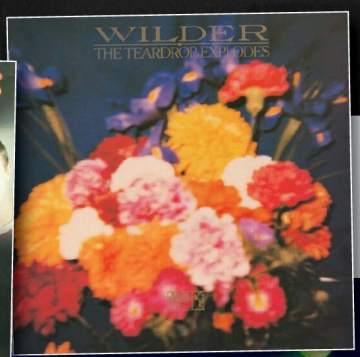
"At that point I wasn't getting on with Julian that well," he recalls. "I'm really not getting on with Dave Balfe. I think Julian wanted me out of the band, and I think Dave wanted me out because I was standing in his way of having an influence on Julian. Julian and I were the main creative force in the band, and I think he wanted to have more input himself."

"Julian was the leader of the band and Mick was second-in-command and I had this weird sort of 'Where am I?'" Balfe says. "I had a very powerful personality. I was opinionated, pushy and uninhibited about arguing with people. I suspect that I thought inside, subconsciously, 'If Mick goes, then it's just me and Julian to sort these things out.' It would be simpler for me to get my agenda."

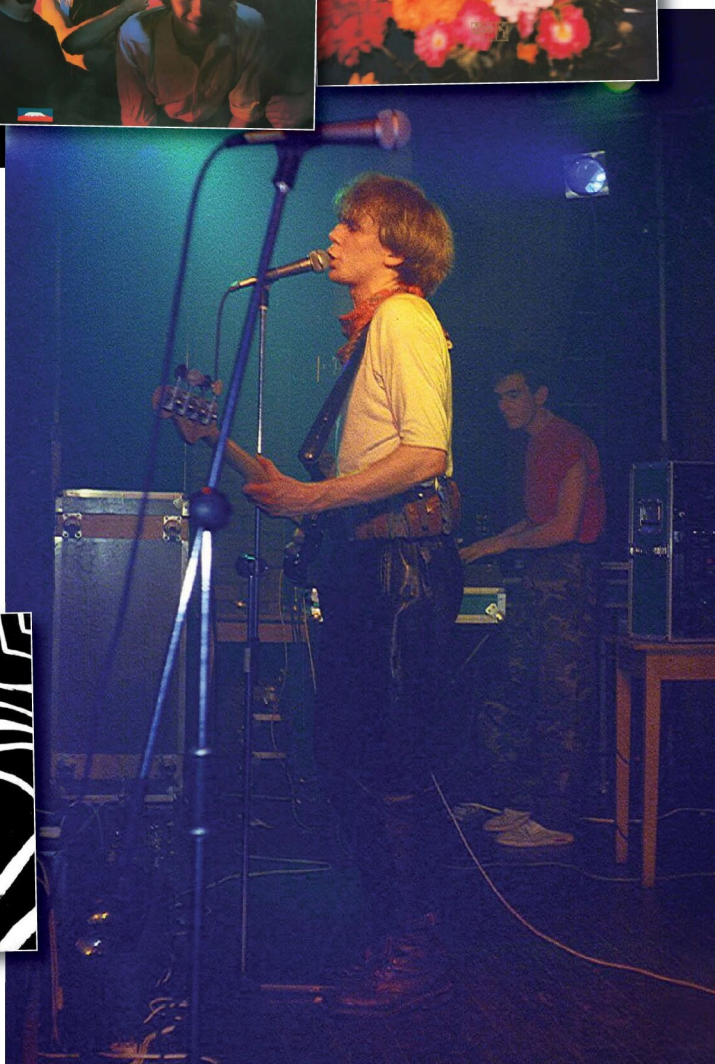
Finkler's replacement was Alan Gill, an old friend of Balfe's from the Wirral, who had played with Balfe in Radio Blank and Dalek I Love You. Together they partly rerecorded the album and added the band's soon-to-be-trademark horn parts, inspired by a newfound love of Scott Walker and Love's *Forever Changes*. Finkler

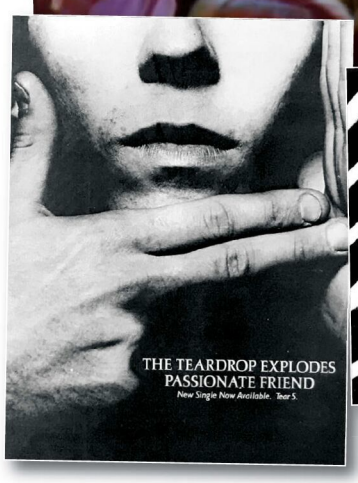


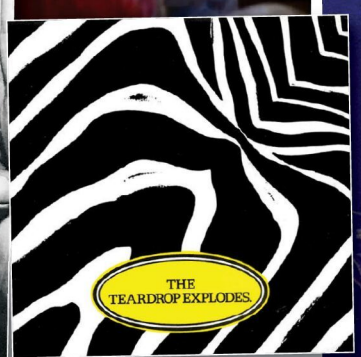




On stage at Newcastle City Hall, February 1982 with new boys including Troy Tate (right); the two Teardrops albums; 'Reward' on *Top Of The Pops*, 19th February '81; 'Passionate Friend' press ad; 'Reward' single; Cope and Balfe on stage in October '80







claims he still plays on "probably two-thirds of the album", including the Teardrops' fourth single and their Mercury debut 'When I Dream', which reached #47 in September '80.

Alan Gill barely lasted six months in The Teardrop Explodes but made two contributions that changed their fortunes completely. One was turning the previously puritanical Cope onto cannabis, loosening him up enough to let Balfe give him his first LSD trip soon after. The other was an unfinished tune he'd been tinkering with, to which Gary Dwyer added a driving Motown beat and Balfe brassy synth stabs alongside live trumpet. But 'Reward' nearly destroyed the band before it was released.

After the first mix by Clive Langer and Alan Winstanley proved disappointing, Balfe blamed Cope for them not supervising the mix personally, but insisted they just release it anyway and move on. Cope promptly quit, and as Balfe was still the Teardrops' manager, he resigned as keyboard player to save the band. Cope returned, remixing 'Reward' with Bill Drummond and engineer Hugh Jones, and transforming the song into a #6 hit that, in February '81, earned the Teardrops their first *Top Of The Pops* appearance.

By now the band's line-up was Cope, Dwyer, and three professional musicians from London: guitarist Troy Tate, keyboard player Jeff Hammer, and bassist Alfie Agius, the latter freeing Cope to become more of a front man and lead singer. Although Balfe was out of the group, Cope brought him along to mime trumpet on the first of several *TOTP* performances where band members took LSD.

"I dropped the acid, Copey didn't," Balfe says. "I played brass on it and sorted out this whole little routine and was totally off my skull with blood pouring from my mouth every time I banged the trumpet into it. People imagine we were like The Grateful Dead, on acid practically every day. But we'd do it once a month or every couple of months really, on average."

Following a re-released 'Treason' (#18, April '81), 'Passionate Friend' was released as a single in September. It should've been a huge hit but stalled at #25. Cope fired Hammer and Agius and brought back Balfe midway through the writing and recording of the second Teardrops album, provisionally titled *The Great Dominions*. The new songs were written entirely by Cope and reflected his guilt over the dissolution of his marriage, as well as the strain of playing the part of a smiling teenybopper icon while feeling like a drug-crazed degenerate. Balfe rearranged the tracks, his enthusiasm for synthesisers and electronic music colliding with Cope's melodic, West Coast influenced muse. The pair inevitably clashed, and neither was entirely satisfied with the results. But despite its relative commercial failure, December '81's *Wilder* (as the album was eventually titled) would come to be seen as The Teardrop Explodes' creative masterpiece, and one of the finest albums of the decade.

The Club Zoo shows were followed by an increasingly calamitous world tour in early '82, taking the band to Australia and New Zealand before they fell apart in the US. Reduced to a trio of Cope, Balfe, and Dwyer, and faced with huge debts as a result of *Wilder* and the mismanaged tour, the Teardrops agreed to undertake a humiliating stadium tour as support to Queen. An unfinished third LP was eventually released in '90 as *Everybody Wants To Shag The Teardrop Explodes* (actually a rejected title for their debut), but Cope's heart was no longer in it. After a best-forgotten final jaunt involving both singer and backing tapes throwing onstage tantrums, he called time on The Teardrop Explodes on 15th November '82, exactly four years after their debut performance.

Julian Cope would go on to a successful solo career as one of the great visionary artists of his era. But The Teardrop Explodes are too often remembered for self-destructive behaviour, in-fighting, and their rivalry with other Liverpool groups than the brilliant if occasionally flawed records they made. Paul Simpson has the last word.

"The thing with us lot supposedly not being friends any more, and all that kind of stuff, is that we loved each other," he says. "We absolutely adored each other. And if we've ever been negative about each other in the press, it's only because we were so in awe of each other and our potential, we could only disappoint. Because we thought we were going to be Patti Smith and Television, when we made records that were less than that, we were disappointed. And because we were kids, we'd say so and upset each other. But we all knew each other before any of us were famous or had records out, so we didn't take bullshit from each other. I don't hold Julian in awe, and he doesn't hold me in awe, but I love him. And I'm thrilled with what he's done with his life." S!

Thanks to Dave Balfe, Mick Finkler and Paul Simpson. Special thanks to Mick Houghton, Julian Stockton and Mark Headley.

FOR THE LOVE OF SCOTT

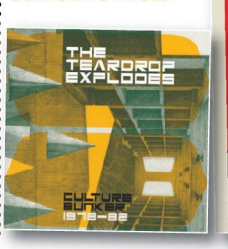
In 1981, Julian Cope convinced Bill Drummond to release a bespoke compilation of Scott Walker songs on Drummond's Zoo label, one of only two albums the label released. Compiled by Cope, *Fire Escape In The Sky: The Godlike Genius Of Scott Walker* introduced a new generation to Walker's music. At the time Walker had retired from music after The Walker Brothers' experimental '78 album *Nite Flights*, and was considered a lost cause, his classic late '60s albums out of print and languishing in bargain bins. The album was deliberately presented in a plain grey sleeve to appeal to post-punk fans of bands like Joy Division and Public Image Limited. The efforts of Cope, who'd been turned on to Walker by Paul Simpson, made a huge difference to Walker's re-evaluation and, eventually, his return to recording with '84's *Climate Of Hunter*, his first solo album in a decade.

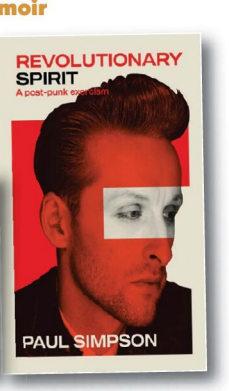
Mick Houghton, publicist for Julian Cope and The Teardrop Explodes, recalls the impact of *Fire Escape In The Sky*. "What's interesting is that Julian, for all the pop press he was getting, had become somebody that journalists now took really seriously. It was a little bit later when he wrote the 'Tales From The Drug Attic' piece (see page 60), but he was already accepted on their level as somebody who knew a lot about music. And I still think to this day that nobody else could have reinvented Scott Walker. And it was a very strange situation because people took him seriously and took the idea of someone like Julian reinventing somebody who'd become an almost MOR forgotten pop star, just by picking out all of these extraordinary self-composed tracks with all this dramatic imagery, and journalists bought into it completely. But a few months later when *Wilder* came out, they didn't want to know."

As told to Ben Graham

"PEOPLE IMAGINE WE WERE LIKE THE GRATEFUL DEAD, ON ACID PRACTICALLY EVERY DAY. BUT WE'D DO IT ONCE A MONTH OR EVERY COUPLE OF MONTHS REALLY, ON AVERAGE"

Culture Bunker: The Teardrop Explodes 1978-82 is out now on UMR/EMI. Paul Simpson's memoir Revolutionary Spirit is published in September by Jawbone Press





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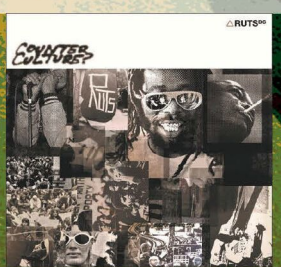

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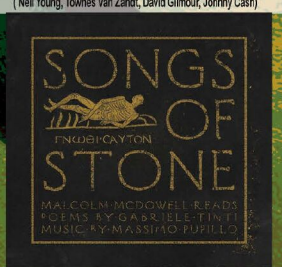

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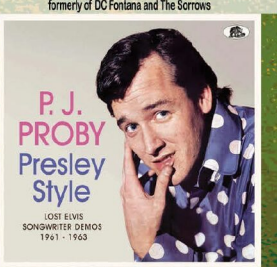

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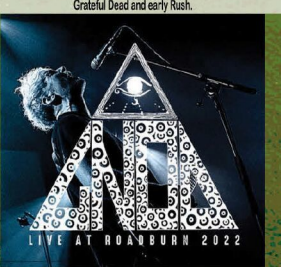

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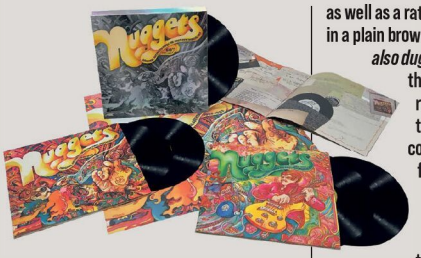
The Final Word

JON 'MOJO' MILLS fondly remembers his first loves with the ultimate *Nuggets* experience



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Nuggets: Original Artyfacts From The First Psychedelic Era: 50th Anniversary
★★★★★
RHINO 5-LP BOX SET

"While I am grateful for the many beers bought for me over the decades by *Nuggets* aficionados... I don't pretend to have invented its genre, nor had a hand in creating any of the meritorious music on display," wrote Lenny Kaye in August 2022. "I was in the right place at the right time, given the reins by Jac Holzman and Elektra." If you've read our previous interviews with Lenny, it's easy to understand what a nice guy he is; a music fan first and foremost, not a scene maker. But he's wrong. He is the very man that identified and classified what '60s garage-punk was. Without him, the dedicated reissue labels, hundreds of bootleg compilations, publications such as this, and the numerous bands that followed in its wake would not have happened quite the way they did. *Nuggets* is like Stonehenge. Its historic value is immense, its impact seismic.

It has been stated on social media, "There aren't any new tracks on this", and questioned, "Why is it so bloody expensive?" Both are moot points. This RSD 2023 release is a limited edition set that houses a facsimile reproduction of the double 1972 album released on Elektra, mastered from the original reels; a second double album (with new artwork by original designer Abe Gurvin), featuring much of what was proposed for a follow up set in '75 – see the handwritten list by Kaye in the accompanying 16-page booklet – and key tracks that couldn't be licensed for the '98 CD box, like ? & The Mysterians' '96 Tears'; as well as a rather interesting single album in a plain brown cardboard sleeve titled *also dug-its*, featuring further songs that fulfil Kaye's *Nuggets* remit. Some will bemoan the lack of a huge book and colour pics, but this set sticks faithfully to the design and concept of the first. Besides, it's not necessary. Okay, so you can find all of this music elsewhere, on vinyl and CD. Hell, you can even stream the majority of it. But, dear collector, that isn't a reason not to shell out. Housed in a lovely box, that along with the vinyl and booklet also includes posters of the *Nuggets* and the proposed second outing artwork, this is a rather lovely 50th anniversary edition that will soon be collectable and remain a cherished item. You may only play it once or twice, but you'll love it forever. As stated on the original album's subtitle, it's an "artyfact".

For this writer, the discovery of this music came with the '84 Rhino spin-off *Nuggets Volume Two: Punk*. That it featured only one song from Kaye's original didn't matter to me. I didn't know of the album then anyway. This was my teenage introduction to The Seeds, Standells, Music Machine and Chocolate Watch Band; bands that became deities to me. I now fully understand how many of us there were, going all the way back to the arrival of the first album in '72, counting many obsessives that would form "punk bands" of their own.

This belated 50th anniversary box set is a treasure for all of us, and hopefully some young guns who are tired of the digital age. Yes, the next generation of compilers went further with *Boulders, Pebbles and Back From The Grave*. The latter ditched the pop and psych, favouring crude, tough teen-punk, but it's easy to expand upon a template. *Nuggets* was the first, and without it The Seeds, Electric Prunes and Shadows Of Knight would not have received such enduring reissue campaigns and legacies.

"*Nuggets* is like Stonehenge. Its historic value is immense, its impact seismic"

The beauty of this set is its innocence. It had nothing to follow. So placing 'Just Like Romeo And Juliet' after 'Hey Joe' and 'Sugar And Spice' before 'Tobacco Road' is part and parcel of the experience. Because of being featured on *Nuggets*, most of these songs, including those on the other albums that couldn't originally be included – The Music Machine's 'Talk Talk', The Sonics' 'The Witch' – are now also *bona fide* classics. Whilst discovering punk Kaye didn't neglect the three-minute pop song of AM radio. That he decided to include Little Anthony & The Imperials, Pearls Before Swine and, curiously, Brit band The Koobas here is the final word. It's also the philosophy that countless compilers and editors of publications like this one have adhered to since.

Sure, you'll find rarer, tougher, more obscure garage-punk elsewhere, and not everything has stood the test of time – I really can do without 'Sugar And Spice' – but *Nuggets* was, and still is, one of the most important collections in the annals of pop history. Celebrate it.

Nuggets poster boys The Seeds

THE BEVIS FROND
The Long Stuff
★★★★

BLUE MATTER 2-CD/2-LP

Originally issued 20 years ago as an exclusive Bevis Frond Community disc, this slightly revamped reissue swaps out a few tracks for a second disc of previously unreleased rarities from Nick Saloman's vault.

While not averse to including side- or album-long tracks on his typical multi-volume albums, most of these selections approach or exceed 10 minutes, highlighted by a jaw-dropping 25-minute live version of 'Superseded'. The attraction here is that Saloman and co know how to stretch a jam in imaginary directions without deteriorating into clock-watching yawners. Most tracks are one-man-band home recordings, with 'Calamity Jane' featuring a patented paint-peeling solo. The more structured 'Yet Another' and mellow, organ-driven 'Skyline Commander' are welcome additions to the canon. 'Here's A Little Love Song' highlights Saloman's poppier side, and Ade Shaw and Andy Ward add some variety on the melancholic *Superseeder* outtake 'Never Forgotten'.

Jeff Penczak

THE BLACKWOOD APOLOGY
House Of Leather
★★★★

SUNDAZED CD/LP

Guitarist Dale Menten graduated from hit single 'Run, Run, Run' with his teenage garage band The Gestures to this ambitious 1969 concept album set during the era of The American Civil War.

The oblique storyline centres on an interracial romance between a Black sex worker and a poor White farmer. With a running time under 35 minutes, the tale of love and sacrifice is lyrically underdeveloped and perhaps worked better when it was translated into a touring rock opera. Musically though, this is a captivating album. Many of the songs share a similar pastoral sound to bands like The Beau Brummels, the sweet harmonies adding a wistful air to the rich melodies. But there are also moments when Menten and his band turn to muscular acid-rock as on highlight 'Here I Am'. With its intriguing narrative premise and appealing tunes this is a welcome rediscovery.

Clive Webb

BRIAN AUGER & JULIE TIPPETTS
Encore
★★★

ESOTERIC CD

Following their '60s collaborations, Auger and Tippetts (formerly Driscoll) had plannd to reunite on record for some time, but the chance didn't arise until 1978 when they made this sultry, American-sounding one-off for Warner Bros.

For Tippetts, who'd gone deep into free-form jazz over the course of two preceding albums, it was an about-turn into pop and soul, though her intense vocal performances retain a jazzy phrasing. This is perhaps the smoothest, most commercial disc to feature her voice, but that's no bad thing. In fact, it's clear that had she wanted to stay in this lane, she could have been a convincing soul artist. Auger produces and plays a dizzying variety of keyboards, synths and percussive instruments, as well as contributing two of the album's best songs – 'Git Up' and 'Freedom Highway'. 'Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood' is re-imagined as a ballad for quiet-storm radio and the album is bookended by two fine Al Jarreau covers.

Charles Donovan

BRINSLEY SCHWARZ
Live Archive Vol 4
★★★

VOGON CD

Transforming themselves from superstar wannabes to hard working, earthy, small town rock 'n' roll troubadours via a chaotic, hyped outing at The Fillmore East, the Brinsleys put their noses to the grindstone and hit the small gig circuit with the intention to rediscover their mojo and simply entertain the fans.

This volume of their live archive again underlines the skill and talent of the band, not least Bob Andrews' superb keyboard work. The self-penned numbers are performed with practiced aplomb and, as with the other releases in this archive series, their taste in choosing songs to cover is immaculate, evinced here by a terrific version of William Bell and Judy Clay's 'Private Number'. Taken straight from the desk at shows in France and Germany, the sound quality on the first six tracks is pretty good, with just a hint of muddiness on the second set, but it's the feel that counts and the performances shine.

Henry Hutton

FAMILY
Anyway
★★★★

ESOTERIC 2-CD

To call Family prog-rock doesn't really begin to scratch the surface. There's nothing wrong with a dose of prog of course, but with a wealth of influences introduced by their

Continues over

LISTEN TO SHINDIG! ON SOHO RADIO
Soho Radio

Andromeda in 1969 with John Cann, right

Greekbeat Phantoms

ANDROMEDA
Andromeda
GUERSSEN LP
1969 Album
GUERSSEN 2-LP
BOTH ★★★★★

The line between post-psychedelic UK '60s beat and prog was a thin one, and power trio Andromeda sat astride it. The band's sole LP for RCA was issued in 1969 with zero promotion, just before leader John Cann joined Atomic Rooster, but is undoubtably a cornerstone of late '60s heavy-rock. Both Cann and bassist Mick Hawksworth played on The Five Day Week Straw People album whilst Hawksworth was later a member of Fuzzy Duck.

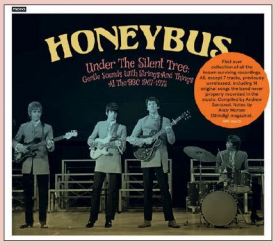
Produced by Eddie Offord before he worked with Yes, Andromeda's self-titled album is an intense blend of shredded acid guitar, drums and bass, incorporating strong vocal harmonies and complex progressive moves. Comparable to Jody Grind or T2, Andromeda offered a darker, heavier character informed by a mournful intensity that would go on to shape the sound of Atomic Rooster. 'Day Of The Change' is epic – a simple plucked guitar figure launching into one of the best heavy progressive rock tracks of the era, resplendent with walls of overdriven guitar, urgent bass and frantic drumming framing portentous lyrics, before dissolving into a rhythm 'n' blues rave-up. If this was the only track on the album, you'd be happy, but more follows. Opener 'Too Old' is the most progressive track on the album, with abstract, controlled jamming, making way for a dread-filled rant about age that echoes Cann's Freakbeat roots in The Attack. The laidback, jazzy feel, and the strange sound of Hawksworth's home-made cello-like instrument on 'And Now The Sun Shines' represents the calm before the storm on an album that follows the theme of life's journey. Killer heavy-blues outing 'The Reason' and 'Return To Sanity', with its Holst 'Mars' motifs and themes of desperation, are among other highlights.

Also available is *1969 Album*, a double set of alternative versions and tracks not included on the RCA album that utilise Cann's original mixes and offer insight into his vision. The first authorised Andromeda releases, both albums boast perfect sound quality and appropriate packaging – collectively, these six sides of vinyl are pretty much an essential trip for fans of the era's heavy sounds.

Richard Allen

Dello and goodbye. Honeybus in 1968

Box Fresh



HONEYBUS
Under The Silent Tree: Gentle Sounds With Strings And Things At The BBC 1967-1973
★★★★
HANKY PANKY 2-CD/2-LP

For fans of late '60s British pop, *Under The Silent Tree* is an unexpected treat. Ostensibly on the promo trail, Honeybus visited BBC studios on numerous occasions, providing us with a huge cache of material, much of it previously unheard in any form until now. Nestled among BBC takes of their finest moments are 10 unheard original songs with a further four appearing on the double CD set. Happily, the quality of these is well up to snuff; full of the period decorations and sublime melancholy that makes the group's take on baroque-pop so distinctive.

While firmly in the mould of previous '60s BBC session collections (host Brian Matthew introductions, short interview snippets and all), the innocent quality of these broadcasts have a very particular charm. Ostensibly live, celebrated songs like 'Do I Still Figure In Your Life' and 'I Can't Let Maggie Go' boast the full complement strings and woodwind respectively. Dig deeper and lesser-known treasures emerge. Band associate Bill Fay's 'Maxine's Parlour' and the Pete Dello-penned mooted single 'Francoise' take the early honours, but there's little here that doesn't warrant multiple listens.

Further in, the band put a brave face in the wake of Dello's departure, coming up trumps with a succession of strong songs without their principal writer. The Beeb take of Ray Cane's 'Fresher Than The Sweetness In Water' is akin to its title, and even a cringey mis-step ('Walking Aphrodisiac') and the fuzziness of some off-air recordings detract little from the general air of loveliness, with Cane and Colin Hare emerging as real heroes of the group's second act. A word too for drummer Pete Kircher who keeps it subtle, with wonderful occasional flashes of flamboyance.

Happily, Pete Dello returns in the early '70s and those later sessions find the group going out on something of a high note. The most essential recordings here have been compiled for an air-tight, double vinyl set. While it might suffice for the curious listener, for the completist there are two CDs comprising every surviving BBC recording which is certainly no less than Honeybus deserve.

Ben Phillipson

ever-rotating line-up and a host of guest musicians, Family were steeped in psych, jazz, folk and heavy blues.

Going strong since the mid-60s, by the time *Anyway* was released in 1970 only two founder members, singer Roger Chapman and guitarist Charlie Whitney, remained. The original album, their fourth, comprises one side of live recordings (captured at Croydon's Fairfield Halls) including a blistering 'Good News, Bad News', the remarkable 'Willow Tree' (Comus comparisons, anyone?) and surprise hit 'Strange Band', and one side of studio tracks that display Family's versatility as they deftly shuffle between blues on 'Part Of The Load' and folk on 'Normans'. Remastered and expanded with 16 contemporary BBC sessions.

Sarah Gregory

THE GOLDEN EARRING
Eight Miles High: Remastered & Expanded
★★★★
RED BULLET CD+DVD

Eight Miles High was the album that proclaimed the band's new moniker (the dropped "s" from Earrings) and the only one to feature ex-Motions drummer Sieb Warner, yet aside from the dynamic remastering job, liners and collected facsimiles, Mat van Hensbergen's accompanying 64-minute documentary is the deal-breaker in this here deluxe edition.

Purposely made to promote the album and focusing on the band's transition from Dutch hitmakers to an envisaged future (one where they would break the States with a US-friendly stage show), it's a joy seeing fly-on-the-wall footage of the GE travelling to and from gigs, killing time between, and gearing-up for jaunts to Blighty to record this album at Olympic Sound Studios, whilst appearing also on the BBC's *Colour Me Pop*, their performance tragically scrapped, presumed wiped – a tragedy indeed if the film's footage of 'It's Alright, But I Admit It Could Be Better' is anything to go by.

Louis Wiggett

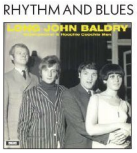
JOE MEEK WITH THE BLUE MEN
The I Hear A New World Sessions
★★★★
CHERRY RED 10-INCH

The release history of Joe Meek's seminal skiffletronica soundscape *I Hear A New World* is one of constant expansion – a 1960 EP (and near-mythical aborted LP pressing) has grown, via numerous multi-format reissues and colourful RSD one-offs, into 2019's definitive double-CD reconstruction/restoration. Now, Cherry Red is planning another CD deep-dive box set into the album sessions, for which this EP, the third entry into their 'Tea Chest Tapes' series, may be considered something of an appetite-whetter.

Artfully woven together into two suites, the seven tracks here represent alternate takes, rehearsals, and experiments, so 'Orbit Around The Moon (Take 1)' features a mysterious female vocal, while a more upbeat 'Love Dance Of The Saroos (Take 1)' suddenly sounds oddly like a lost Stereolab B-side. Comprehensive and authoritative liner notes helpfully hold our hand through all of this, and the mastering of these offcuts is, like the vinyl itself, beautifully clean.

Christopher Budd

LONG JOHN BALDRY & STEAMPACKET
BBC Broadcasts 1965-66
★★★★
RHYTHM AND BLUES LP



Time for a trip back to the mid-60s sound of history in the making in the form of a collection of archive recordings of Steampacket and Long John Baldry's Hoochie Coochie Men.

Sourced from two BBC sessions from November 1965 and July '66 the main items of interest here are the tracks featuring

Continues over

a cellarful of soul

PAUL RITCHIE rounds up the hottest soul and funk reissues

Feuding duo **SAM & DAVE** regrouped to re-record their classic Stax hits in the early '80s for a fake greatest hits collection and further tinkering is at work on **Soul Man Explosion** (★★★, GOLDEN LANE CD), a dubious attempt to reboot the Sam & Dave experience to a new generation. Steve Cropper, Brian Auger and The Courettes have been drafted to add fresh parts to three tracks and, while the results are far from offensive, one must question the point of all this meddling. In a world of AI-generated music and "live" holograms of dead stars, maybe we shouldn't be surprised. Stick with the originals, they were pretty good to begin with, thanks very much.

The Complete Scepter Singles 1962-1973 (★★★, REAL GONE 3-CD) by **DIONNE WARWICK** follows hot on the heels of a recent box celebrating her '70s recordings for Warner Brothers. This set captures Warwick's most famous songs and biggest hits, mostly written and produced by the legendary team of Burt Bacharach and Hal David. Warwick's silky vocals and the exquisite arrangements brought a new level of sophistication to the pop charts, for better or worse. Seventy-four tracks in all, including the odd left turn, such as when Warwick teamed up with the likes of Chips Moman at American Sound Studios in Memphis.

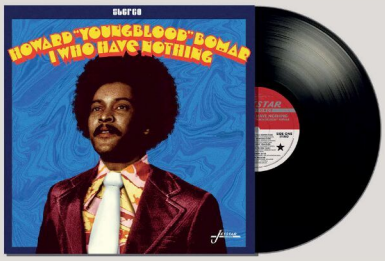
'I Been Watchin' You' by Chicago-based combo **THE SOUTHSIDE MOVEMENT** has been sampled by The Beastie Boys, Beck, Erykah Badu and many more. It's the attention-grabbing lead track on their self-titled 1973 debut album, reissued here for the first time. **The South Side Movement** (★★★★, REAL GONE LP) also includes a strong cover of Stevie Wonder's 'Superstition' alongside other up-tempo and sturdy funky soul efforts, evidently inspired by the likes of Sly & The Family Stone and Funkadelic. Expect lots of booming brass and funky wah-wah guitar on what has quite rightly become a crate-diggers' delight.

Bronx-based band **THE RHYTHM MAKERS** originally released **Soul On Your Side** (★★★★, BE WITH LP) in 1976. The album is packed with hard-hitting, high-energy funk like the sprawling 'Can You Feel It (Part 1)' and disco heat of 'You Better Believe It'. The hypnotic 'Zone' is a funky freak-out with an unrelenting bass-heavy groove alongside flashy flourishes of cosmic organ fills and flash guitar licks. The group were harmony experts too, as displayed on the sweet funk of 'Street Dreamin'' and airy ballad 'You're My Last Girl'. The centrepiece though is the much sampled 'Monterey', a heavy disco-funk instrumental with a tasty B-Boy drum break.

Sam & Dave in unhappier times

If these two don't get the party going, **WILLIE HENDERSON & THE SOUL EXPLOSIONS** is sure as hell going to give it a good go. **Funky Chicken** (★★★H, ORG MUSIC LP) was originally released in 1970 on the Brunswick label. Previously reissued by Vampisoul, it gets a limited re-run for Record Store Day in the US. Led by saxophonist Henderson and produced by Carl Davis, the album features funky instrumental takes of soul and funk classics alongside playful originals such as the two-part title track and party starter 'Soulful Football'. This version includes two bonus tracks, 'Break Your Back' and 'Loose Booty', the latter of which was once again sampled by The Beastie Boys.

The late **HOWARD 'YOUNGBLOOD' BOMAR** cut a couple of rare 45s including the startling lo-fi ballad 'I Who Have Nothing' and the funky dancer 'I'm Gonna Love You'. Much later, he covered Prince. For the first time, his recordings have been compiled on **I Who Have Nothing** (★★★★, JETSTAR LP). His early R&B sides, many unreleased, hint at a rare talent. Bomar was described as "a master showman" and always "stylishly dressed". Despite a chaotic personal life Bomar kept singing, opening shows for many big names passing through his Denver hometown. He revisited his signature tune in the late '80s and did an interesting laidback cover of 'Purple Rain' but the production of these latter-day recordings is typical of that era, at odds with the rawer, more essential early recordings.



HELENE SMITH was a Miami soul queen in waiting. She released a string of 45s and one collectable LP for the Deep City label, the best of which has been compiled on **I Am Controlled By Your Love** (★★★★, NUMERO GROUP LP). The melancholic title track is an evocative oldies ballad and 'Thrills And Chills', probably her most famous track, is a real feelgood dancer, the singer's alluring, kittenish vocal blending perfectly with a rudimentary but spirited backing track. An amateurish charm permeates on this moody selection of youthful anguish. Other highlights include the soulful 'You Got To Do Your Share' and the driving raw funk of 'What's In The Lovin''.

Another singer who operated on the margins of the rare soul scene was **BARBARA STANT**, who recorded for Norfolk, Virginia's Shiptown label. **My Mind Holds Onto Yesterday** (★★★★, NUMERO GROUP LP) captures a singer with obvious gospel roots, performing driving numbers like 'I'm Going To Outfit You Baby' and sultry ballads such as 'Unsatisfied Woman'. Much like Smith, these recordings are often sparse in production but rich in ambition. The progressive twist and turns on the broody funk of 'Shadow In Your Footsteps' suggests a will to experiment beyond the common song structures often found in soul music.

Eddie Singleton's Shrine label, based in Washington DC was famously dubbed the rarest soul label due to the scarcity of its mid-60s recordings. Years later, fate intervened when the first Shrine compilations were issued in 1990 and then across two subsequent CD volumes. Credited back then for revitalising the UK northern soul scene, **Shrine Northern** (★★★★★, KENT LP) offers a fresh overview with 14 choice up-tempo dancers pressed on vinyl. The Cairos' 'Stop Overlooking Me' and The DC Blossoms' 'Hey Boy' are just two of the hits that never were. Packaged in an attractive cover featuring girl group Les Chansonettes and with the same attention to detail that Kent applies to its CD releases, this is an essential purchase for any discerning northern soul fan.

Little Boy Blue

REG KING
Reg King: Deluxe Edition
★★★★
STRAWBERRY 3-CD

Crowned as mod royalty, Reggie King never sat at pop's top table, the hit parade bafflingly untroubled by The Action's handful of soulful singles. Four years passed before he'd reappear in 1971 with his only album, now expanded on this 3-CD edition.

Recorded with a nucleus of Mighty Baby and BB Blunder, in what guitarist Brian Godding called "a barmy collective", the studio expenses left little money for promotion, so it was a blink-and-you'll-miss-it release. Later, discovered by Action fans who'd mythologised the band through the prism of their own modernist revival, the album would feel too rocky, with Reggie buried too deep in the mix.

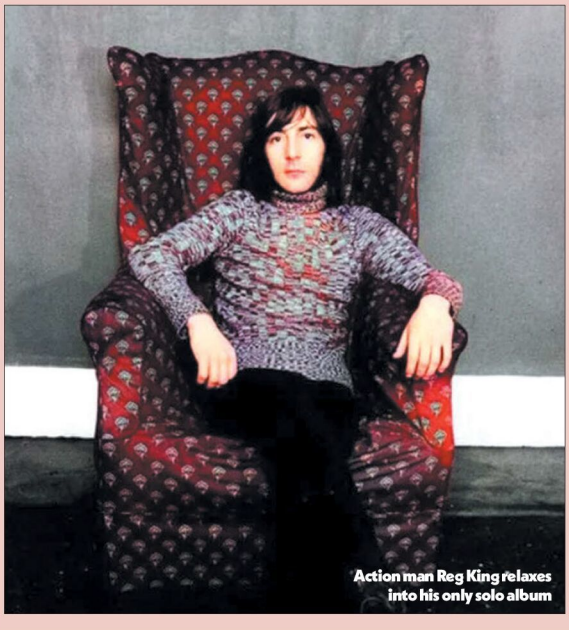
Yet time has gradually revealed *Reg King* to be a rollicking heavy-soul record. King's vocal now had a coarser texture, scuffed and bruised at the edges by life. Hear his crackling timbre on 'You Go Have Yourself A Good Time', raw unvarnished emotion with gospel support from Doris Troy. Previous Action demos 'Little Boy' and the explosive 'In My Dreams' are now fully realised, while Brian Auger and Mick Taylor duel throughout the propulsive greasy rocker 'Savannah'. 'Gone Away' is a heart-breaking closer.

Disc Two tweaks Circle Records' 2012 collection *Looking For A Dream*, an extraordinary unearthing of then previously unreleased gems. Centred around a '69 session with his Action colleagues, these are stylistically closer to their revered *Rolled Gold* sessions. Containing clarity absent in the claustrophobic *Reg King* cuts, the quality underscores what an accomplished songwriter King was. Acoustically driven with uplifting energy, the dominant mood – bar the harrowing 'They Must Be Talking About Me – is optimistic.

The third disc gathers alternative demos and out-takes, including an early version of 'Down The Drain' and an untitled instrumental sketch, neither heard before.

Any Reggie King discussion inevitably returns to why he never "made it", as if commercial success is the reliable barometer of artistic achievement, but according to drummer Roger Powell in Lois Wilson's liner notes that was never his goal. "Reg wasn't after any accolades; he didn't want to make it or be confirmed as this great singer." Want it or not, this package reaffirms that Reg King was indisputably a great singer.

Mark Raison



Action man Reg King relaxes into his only solo album

Giorgio Gomelsky's self-styled supergroup Steampacket starring Long John Baldry, Julie Driscoll, Rod Stewart and Brian Auger & The Trinity. With no original material on offer the fare here is a repertoire of trusty R&B and soul covers, with a winning take on The Lovin' Spoonful's 'Didn't Want To Have To Do It' thrown in for good measure. Also featured are two rare tracks from August '65 recorded for *Shindig* at the fifth National Jazz & Blues Festival, which find Baldry, Driscoll and Rod The Mod whooping it up in the company of Eric Burdon and Steve Winwood.

Grahame Bent

MANDRASSI & ZOLLINGER
Rhythm And Sound
★★★★
SONOR MUSIC EDITIONS LP

Mandrassi and Zollinger are evidently pseudonyms for Anna Maria Assunta Andreassi (one of the first female library music composers in Italy) and Sergio Pagano (brother of composer, author and poet Mario). They're joined here by the I Beati band – not, one assumes, the Brit-inspired beat combo operating a few years previously – for a first-time repress of their 1973 entry into the small but impossibly hard-to-find catalogue of the Ludo Rekord label.

It's an instrumentally vivid disc, bookended by wailing, reverb-drenched harmonicas and just a touch of fuzz guitar. Sax-heavy numbers are by turns sprightly and sleazy, while acoustic piano gives a punchy Duke Of Burlington feel to several tracks, before a glossy synth arrives halfway through to join some funky bass on the lovely 'Moog Yet'. Later there's a heavy homage to Brubeck on 'Rhythm Five', followed by the odd, jittery '50s throwback 'Clavi Rock' – a fascinatingly broad palette.

Christopher Budd

DOUG McKECHNIE
The Complete San Francisco Moog 1968-72
★★★
VG+ CD

Here's some history for you Shindiggers! At the turn of the '60s, when Moog synthesisers were relatively obscure and psychedelia was hurtling towards electronica, one man was busy changing the frequency. In recent years, Doug McKechnie's contributions to early electronica came to light when his Moog recordings were unearthed. Now, McKechnie's experiments are available on *The Complete San Francisco Moog 1968-72*.

McKechnie got his hands on a Moog in the late '60s and began performing his sonic experiments all around San Francisco. (Years later, his instrument was given to Christopher Franke of Tangerine Dream!) Like a scientist in a laboratory, McKechnie experiments with meditative droning, astral sounds, and thumping electronic builds. 'Search For an Honest Man' and 'Berkeley Art Museum' stand out for their likeness to more modern electronic soundwaves, while 'Live at the Family Dog' offers strange insight into early audiences' Moog mania.

Tess Carges

NANA
Africadeus
NANA NELSON ANGELO NOVELLI
Nana Nelson Angelo Novelli
BOTH ★★★★
BOTH ALTERCAT LPS

These two contrasting yet complementary albums were originally released on French label Saravah featuring Nana Vasconcelos, which highlight the scope of the acclaimed Brazilian percussionist's manifold talents.

Africadeus (1973) which is widely considered to be the album that put him on the map as arguably the foremost Brazilian percussionist of his era. Recorded in Paris, the remarkable *Africadeus*, with its deep folkloric vibes, is essentially an improvised solo showcase on which Nana is heard in almost incantatory mood coaxing an extraordinary range of sounds and rhythms from a variety of native Brazilian percussion instruments including the berimbau.

Likewise recorded in Paris, *Nana Nelson Angelo Novelli* ('75) is very much a group affair, for which Nana was reunited with fellow members of Clube da Esquina. The result is a captivating collection of mellow acoustic songs rich in dreamlike folky textures and bathed in subtle shades of psychedelia.

Grahame Bent

PHIL OCHS
The Best Of The Rest: Rare And Unreleased Recordings
★★★★
LIBERATION HALL CD/2-LP

Originally released in 2020, but reissued on vinyl for RSD 2023, this album's title acknowledges that potential buyers may already have similar sets. So, is this a worthwhile addition to your collection?

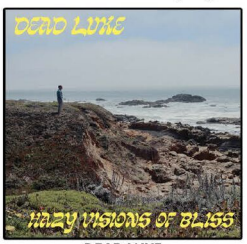
Mostly demos from 1964-65, eight of the 20 tracks (all excellent in their own right) appear in not dissimilar versions on either *I Ain't Marching Anymore* or *In Concert,* while a further six made previous rarities compilations. Elsewhere, 'Sailors And Soldiers' is an effective lament for the plight of the doomed fighting man, 'Take It Out Of My Youth' describes the beat condition, and 'I Wish I Could Have Been Along' is addressed to an unnamed freewheeling traveller, perhaps Woody Guthrie or even Jack Kerouac. Three further unreleased recordings come from Ochs' more expansive if troubled '67-70 period. Topical lyrics inevitably date, but Phil Ochs' songs, here in their purest forms, are as relevant and enjoyable as ever.

Ben Graham

KING GIZZARD & THE LIZARD WIZARD
"INFEST THE RATS' NEST (LIVE)" LP

SWEET PETE
"I WANNA BE A PIGGY" 7" SINGLE

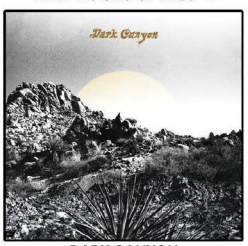
NON TRAVELLIN' BAND
"REST IN PEACE, HIPPIE" LP



DEAD LUKE
"HAZY VISIONS OF BLISS" LP

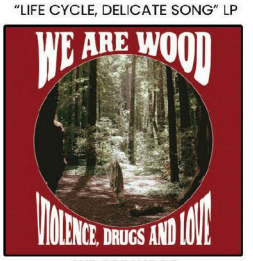
Nudie Records

UNDERGROUND RIVER
"LIFE CYCLE, DELICATE SONG" LP



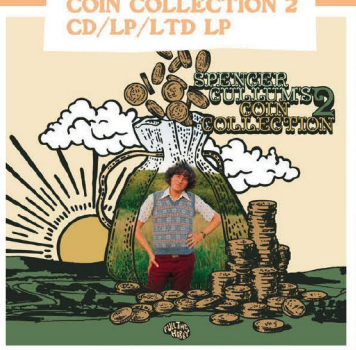
DARK CANYON
GATEFOLD LP

MA'AM
"NAUGHTY" 7" SINGLE

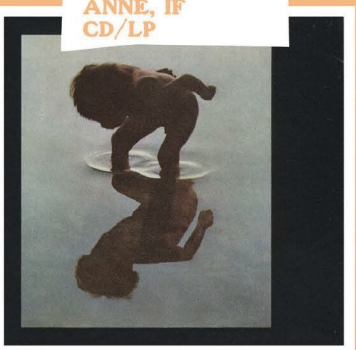


WE ARE WOOD
"VIOLENCE, DRUGS AND LOVE" LP

SPENCER CULLUM'S
COIN COLLECTION 2
CD/LP/LTD LP



GHOST WOMAN
ANNE, IF
CD/LP



FULL TIME HOBBY

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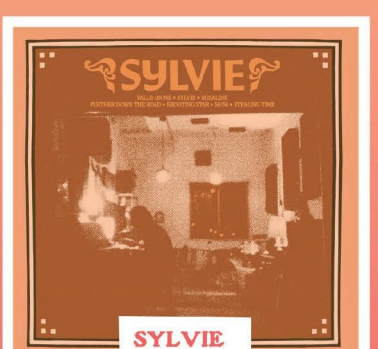
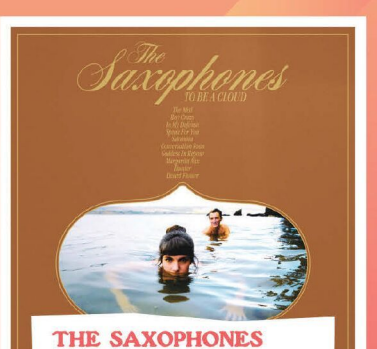
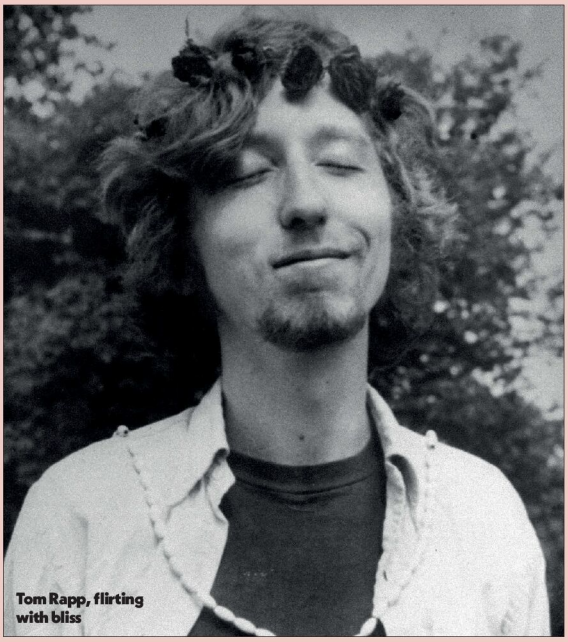


SYLVIE
SYLVIE
CD/LP



THE SAXOPHONES
TO BE A CLOUD
CD/LP/200g Audiophile LP



Tom Rapp, flirting with bliss

Occult Transmissions

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

One Nation Underground

★★★★

Balaklava

★★★★

BOTH EARTH 2-LPS

Led by enigmatic, erudite singer-songwriter Tom Rapp, Pearls Before Swine made many fine albums in the late '60s and early '70s, but their reputation largely rests on their first two LPs, recorded for cult New York label ESP-Disk in '67 and '68 respectively.

As the first song on *One Nation Underground* and the first Rapp ever wrote, the haunting 'Another Time' has a claim to be the ground zero of acid-folk, while the wilfully off-key 'Surrealist Waltz' has a similar strange beauty to Country Joe & The Fish's 'Bass Strings'. In between, Rapp and friends play a '20s children's song as a Dylan parody ('Playmate'), spell out "a popular four-letter word" in dots and dashes on '(Oh Dear) Miss Morse', and encompass both the gloriously gothic 'Morning Song' and the punk venom of 'Uncle John'.

Nation was recorded in four days with an assortment of antique instruments, audio oscillators and guitars. Follow-up *Balaklava* took 18 months, with a large cast of guest musicians. Conflating Vietnam with The Crimean War in one long parade of bloody futility and haunted by the audio ghosts of Trumpeter Landfrey and Florence Nightingale, *Balaklava* is more deeply psychedelic, not to say occult, on 'Translucent Carriages' but elsewhere leans towards more mature, conventional arrangements, even if Rapp's words are as allusively metaphysical as ever. The divisive 'Ring Thing' with its Tolkien lyrics and jarring tape rewind, is a welcome final burst of uncommercial weirdness.

Both reissues include bonus discs of out-takes and alternate versions plus, on *Nation*, two cuts from the original acetate the band sent to ESP, from which 'State U Instrumental' is a surprisingly rocky piece, dominated by vamping organ and crashing drums, that could be a distant cousin of The Modern Lovers' 'Egyptian Reggae'. *Balaklava* includes a full-length 'Ring Thing', a Tim Buckley-esque 'Suzanne' live in '71, and a powerful radio session version of 'Translucent Carriages' from the same year. Unfortunately, the "long version" of 'Translucent Carriages' listed on the sleeve is missing, the same take of 'Images Of April' appearing twice instead. Nevertheless, these handsome new editions are well worth having.

Ben Graham

OTTILIE PATTERSON

3000 Years With Ottilie

★★★

SUNBEAM LP+45

How Irish singer Patterson, aged almost 40 and 15 years into a storied career with Chris Barber's Jazz Band, ended up recording this album for the ailing Marmalade label in 1969 remains shrouded in mystery – one of those bizarre anomalies that peppered the late '60s musical landscape.

With source material ranging from fourth century elegies and 13th century drinking songs to modern translations by poets and playwrights (you want some Shakespeare with your pop? Look no further) and Patterson's own ruminations on life and love, *3000 Years With Ottilie* remains a singularly eclectic proposition. Funky electric pop, mournful folk tales and timeless pastorals sit cheek-by-jowl like music was always supposed to be this way. Five-minute anti-war dirge 'The Bitterness Of Death' takes centre-stage, and is also present on the bonus 45, which curiously replaces covetable original B-side 'Spring Song' with previously unheard demo 'Make Me Or Break Me'.

Andy Morten

PERNICE BROTHERS

Overcome by Happiness: 25th Anniversary Deluxe Edition

★★★★★

NEW WEST LP/2-LP

A lot could be said about how in the late '90s Joe Pernice's gift for indie-pop jewels with a baroque, wracked heart produced something that was both timeless and ahead of its time. Suffice to say, *Overcome By Happiness* opens with one of the most perfectly gorgeous (or gorgeously perfect?) pop songs ever recorded ('Crestfallen') and the 11 tracks that follow never lose the breath-taking-and-catchy-and-devastating-and-amusing momentum.

At the time, mixing vulnerability with a penchant for orchestral AM pop wasn't exactly hip. Now that the album is 25 and gets the deluxe edition it deserves (with an extra LP featuring the Brothers' first singles, plus demos) we can safely say that while you can pay a high compliment to some records by noting that they've aged gracefully, *Overcome By Happiness* actually sounds more topical today than it did when it came out.

Camilla Aisa

POCO

The Sony/BMG A's & B's

★★★

BGO 2-CD

Somewhere in the multiverse, Poco are celebrated as one of the most commercially successful rock bands of all time while The Eagles are no more than a cult act. Why the former failed to find the same audience for their pioneering country-rock is one of the mysteries of popular music.

This singles collection concentrates on the years 1969 to '74 (and '89 reunion album *Legacy*) and is certainly a reminder that the inconsistency of their line-up did little to affect the consistency of their recorded output. The album is of most interest for its inclusion of early non-album single 'My Kind Of Love/Hard Luck'. Those tracks also feature on the superior *Forgotten Trail* compilation, which has the further attraction of previously unreleased recordings. For those who already have that album this new release is rather redundant other than for the completist.

Clive Webb

REDBONE

A's And B's

★★★★★

BGO 2-CD

Redbone was a Native American rock band, and I only drive home their ethnicity because *they* did, proudly celebrating their heritage in their stage dress, their album art, and their music. Think their only UK hit, the swampy singalong 'The Witch Queen Of New

Continues over

tune up

THOMAS PATTERSON more jazz than any one jazz round-up can take

Saxophones ahoy with our first four releases. We come out punching with saxophonist and bandleader **OLIVER NELSON**'s **Black, Brown And Beautiful** (★★★★, FLYING DUTCHMAN LP) from 1969, a rousing tribute to Martin Luther King that's half *avant-garde* classicism (think Aaron Copland scoring a John Frankenheimer thriller) and half big band groove. Nelson's '61 LP *The Blues And The Abstract Truth* may be his most famous work but for *Shindig!*'s money, this is just as good, with a real cinematic heft (unsurprising, as Nelson worked on Hollywood movies like *Death Of A Gunfighter* and *Last Tango In Paris*).

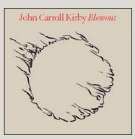
More *avant-garde* thrills with **MARION BROWN QUARTET**'s **Mary Ann (Live In Bremen 1969)** (★★★★, MOOSICUS 2-CD). Alto saxophonist Brown cut his chops on some of the most radical jazz albums of the '60s, playing on John Coltrane's *Ascension* and Archie Shepp's *Fire Music*. In 1967 he moved to Europe, where he dabbled in soundtracks and further developed his impressionistic sound, teaming up with Ed Kroeger, Sigi Busch and Steve McCall in the process. In '69, the quartet landed at Club Lila Eule in Bremen where this two and a half hour set was recorded. Tough and uncompromising, this is defiantly out-there gear, especially on tribute to Brown's mentor 'Ode To Coltrane' and percussion-heavy 'Modus Rhythmicus'.

Prog-rock fans may have heard of post-bop saxophonist **HAROLD LAND** thanks to Yes, who named a track after him on their debut album. Quite why they alighted on him is uncertain, as 1972's **Damisi** (★★★★, WEWANTSOUNDS LP) demonstrates that Land's music during the prog era was more a mix of fusion and funk than anything redolent of 10-minute synth solos and Roger Dean artwork. Recorded for Bob Shad's Mainstream label, *Damisi* is a five-track belter with a couple of killer grooves in the shape of 'In The Back, In The Corner, In The Dark' and drummer Ndugu Chancler's marvellously-titled 'Chocolate Mess', which sports magnetic bass playing from Buster Williams.

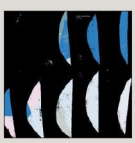
Altercat is rapidly becoming one of *Shindig!*'s favourite reissue labels thanks to its catalogue of eccentric jazz and prog albums unearthed from God knows where. Latest release, 1970's **Blues Para Un Cosmonauta** (★★★★, ALTERCAT LP) from Argentinian saxophonist **HORACIO "CHIVO" BORRAO** doesn't blot the copybook, a confection of spiritual-jazz as bonkers as anything Altercat has unearthed so far. This starts off relatively benignly, mixing South American folk moves with spry saxophone, but on eponymous second track, lounge-jazz bizarrely merges with fuzzy synths, and by closer 'Mi amigo Tarzán', which merges jungle tribalism with the sounds of outer space, all bets are off. Marvellous.

A spotlight on new label British Progressive Jazz, an imprint mostly dedicated to lost LPs and live sets from some of the most respected names in British jazz from the '60s and '70s, like Michael Garrick, John Dankworth and Graham Collier. Recent releases include **DON RENDELL SEXTET**'s **The Odysseus Suite** (★★★, CD), ostensibly a companion piece to Neil Ardley, Don Rendell and Ian Carr's *Greek Variations & Other Aegean Exercises* from '70; **ELTON DEAN, STEVE MILLER, PIP PYLE**'s **Home Brewed** (★★★★, CD), a home recording from '76 that witnesses a coming together of Elton John's namesake and Canterbury scene stalwarts Miller and Pyle; and **In A Violent Way** (★★★★, CD) from **DEMOLISHED MEN**, a new recording from BPJ's founder Matt Parker, a eulogy to sci-fi and prog with a band name cadged from Alfred Bester's proto-cyberpunk novel and a cover that gives a wink and a nod to Hawkwind. But steering you to just a couple of their releases, may we suggest two from '70: **John Mayer's Indo Jazz Fusions With Larry Adler** (★★★★, CD) and **THE KEITH TIPPETT GROUP**'s **How Long This Time? Live 1970** (★★★★, CD/2-LP). The Indo Jazz Fusion album is extraordinary, surely one of the few psychedelic jazz albums to pair Eastern promises with plaintive harmonica (courtesy of *Midnight Cowboy* legend Larry Adler), whilst The Keith Tippett Group need no introduction to Vertigo swirl collectors, their '71 album *Dedicated To You, But You Weren't Listening* a classic of jazz-rock. Tracks from that album now appear on this LP, live studio sessions featuring Elton Dean and Jeff Clyne rescued from the archives and sounding glorious. Long live British Progressive Jazz and all who sail in her.

Finally, a brisk saunter through some of the most interesting new jazz recordings. From bass/guitar duo **YOSEF GUTMAN LEVITT/ TAL YAHALOM** comes **Tsuf Harim** (★★★★, SOUL SONG CD/LP), an enchanting selection based around traditional Jewish instrumentals called nigunim, presented in a stripped-back, jazzy setting. Curiously, despite their Sephardic roots, many of these tracks possess an English folk feel; file alongside Jim Ghedi and Toby Hay.



A trio of kindred spirits next. We've covered **JOHN CARROLL KIRBY** in the past, and eighth album **Blowout** (★★★★, STONES THROW CD/2-LP) is a smooth miscellany of jazz, fusion, synth-led library and yacht-rock that reminds this writer of the background music that used to play on Teletext (a massive compliment). As smooth as a pour of double cream, it's no wonder artists as varied as David Holmes, Harry Styles and Mac De Marco have worked with him. **Balans** (★★★★, JAZZLAND CD/LP), the fourth album from Norwegian jazz man **HAROLD LASSEN**, probably takes its name from the Norwegian word for "balance" and not the London restaurant chain, but either way, we'd like to hear the smooth, saxophone-meets-synth sounds over a champagne brunch; this is laidback, romantic gear, soothing even when it skitters on cuts like 'Dada-daddia'. Meanwhile, *Shindig!* pats its back on having covered prodigious British jazz talent **GREG FOAT** from his early psychedelic jazz days, and his latest **Dolphin** (★★★★, STRUT CD/LP), recorded with **GIGI MASIN**, is a doozy of synthetic jazz sounds, covering similar territory to Kirby but with a vibe recalling the best of Paul Bley and a floating ambience perfect for taking us into summer.



In existence for almost 15 years, 43-piece Scandinavian jazz/ experimental/psychedelic/noise band **FIRE! ORCHESTRA**'s latest **Echoes** (★★★★★, RUNE GRAMMOFON 2-CD/3-LP) is a remarkable folk-horror epiclesis meets Last Poets invocation, such disparate talents as Dungen's Reine Fiske and multi-instrumentalist Joe McPhee contributing to a primevally rousing triple album of flames, blood and full-throated proclamations that's perhaps the best of all this month's releases – no mean feat in an arena packed with beauties.

Joe Harriott and John Mayer in 1966

Wild Things

THE TEARDROP EXPLODES
Culture Bunker 1978–82
★★★★★

UMR/EMI 6-CD/7-LP BOX SET

Of all the bands labelled "post-punk", The Teardrop Explodes most effectively utilised and updated the '60s psychedelic canon as a vehicle for self-expression and exploration rather than pastiche or technical grandstanding. With singer Julian Cope hiring, firing, and sometimes re-hiring musicians at a bewildering rate, the Teardrops released just two albums and less than a dozen singles in their lifetime, yet developed at such a rate that nailing their sound with a single description is almost impossible.

Compiled by Cope with long-term publicist Mick Houghton, this mammoth, lavish box set charts an alternate course through their troubled history, annotated with lengthy, informative sleeve notes, rare photos and ephemera. The first two discs collect all their singles and B-sides, from 'Sleeping Gas' ('96 Tears' channelled through the surreal northern clatter of The Fall) to the dream-funk of 'You Disappear From View' from their final posthumous EP. In between is perfect pop and singularly weird flips, best exemplified by the coupling of Top 10 hit 'Reward' with the unsettling, bizarre 'Strange House In The Snow'.

Two contrasting live sets provide fascinating insights into the band's development. The first, from Manchester's Band On The Wall in March '79 (only their fifth gig), accurately compared by Houghton to The Velvet Underground's *Live At Max's Kansas City*, is dominated by Mick Finkler's raucous, scratchy guitar and Paul Simpson's droning organ. The second, from Club Zoo in December '81, finds a hoarse, acid-battered Cope backed by a clean, professional band capable of complex melodies and deft improvisation, alternately celebratory and melancholy.

Elsewhere, Houghton has attempted to compile alternate versions of the studio albums, including the unfinished LP being worked on at the time of their split, putting together demos, live versions and unreleased songs that are sometimes significantly different to the final product. Most successful and revelatory is the alternative *Wilder*, the early incarnations and out-takes presented here giving a genuinely different perspective on the band's crowning achievement.

The CD set is more comprehensive and carefully curated, while the vinyl feels lushly luxurious. Either way, one of our greatest off-kilter pop groups has emerged from the bunker.

Ben Graham

LISTEN TO SHINDIG! ON SOHO RADIO
Soho Radio

Orleans' or 'We Were All Wounded At Wounded Knee', a European smash banned Stateside for – get this – suggesting Whitey was the bad guy.

They also produced highly burnished pop, as exemplified by their best-known song, 1974's effervescent 'Come And Get Your Love', and were equally adept at soul, funk, jazz and Latino. There's even some creamy lounge in 'New Blue Sermonette', and 'Speakeasy' provides a sprinkling of country. Regardless of genre it was always recognisably Redbone, thanks to the fluid picking of Lolly Vegas (Hendrix's favourite guitarist) and the 'King Kong' beats developed by original drummer Pete DePoe. If you haven't already, it's time to come and get some Redbone.

Peter Gallagher

RENAISSANCE
Live Fillmore West And Other Adventures
★★★★

REPERTOIRE 4-CD+DVD BOX SET

Released only a month after King Crimson's *In The Court Of The Crimson King*, Renaissance's eponymous debut album is a less celebrated but still important foundation stone in progressive rock. The band fell apart before completing a second record, with an entirely new line-up assuming their identity.

The recovery of so much material, which includes concert performances, radio sessions and a television appearance, as well as excellent liner notes, is therefore cause for fans to celebrate. How successful the band was in achieving an ambitious fusion of folk, jazz and classical music remains a matter of discussion. It is difficult though to argue with the demos on the fourth disc. Stripped of the complicated arrangements of their other work, these shorter, acoustic songs showcasing the beauty of Jane Relf's singing voice are an absolute delight. They hint at a path not taken that could have led to rewarding destinations.

Clive Webb

GIANNI SAFRED
Electronic Designs
★★★★

FOUR FLIES LP

Originally released in 1977 in a familiar green 'Music Scene' sleeve, this disc was initially credited to "Gianni Safred and his electronic instruments" – and he certainly had quite the collection. But it's not the expensive gear that makes the record work, rather it's Safred's keyboard chops and experimental instincts, both no doubt honed during his post-war years playing with jazz giants including Django Reinhardt and Stéphane Grappelli.

The collection kicks off with a fusion of mechanised rhythms, complex harmonies, and *mysterioso* electric pianos, but several tracks, most notably 'Spheres', break up the frantic pace with a very welcome, loungey feel. One is never far from a virtuosic keyboard performance however – the disc's centrepiece 'Hasty Chant' is almost insanely frenzied in this regard. On Side Two, Safred gets dubby with the squelchy bass of 'Elastic Points' and 'Planetarium', while laidback closer 'Poe's Clock' nonchalantly fades out just as it's heating up.

Christopher Budd

LABI SIFFRE
Watch Me
★★★

DEMON LP

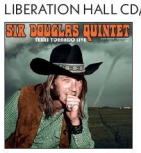
Though there was once a Labi Siffre compilation called *Watch Me* for the European market, this is something more intriguing. It's a collection comprising one or two songs from Siffre's third album *Crying, Laughing, Loving, Lying* (1972), with the balance made up by non-album recordings from the same time-frame. Though the latter have appeared on expanded edition CDs before, this marks their first vinyl outing.

It's structured with singles and B-sides on Side One and off-cuts on Side Two, two of which ('You Make It Easy' and 'Good Old Days') sound markedly '80s. It's impossible to argue with a song as sweet and earnest as 'It Must Be Love' (so different to the best-selling but arch Madness version), and the two additional hits – including the single that gives this collection its title – only confirm what a gifted singer-songwriter Siffre has always been. Still, this is a conceptually muddled collection that doesn't match the quality of Siffre's original '70s albums.

Charles Donovan

SIR DOUGLAS QUINTET
TEXAS TORNADO LIVE
★★★★

LIBERATION HALL CD/LP



For all the props given to Gram Parsons, San Antonio's Doug Sahm offered him serious competition in the Cosmic American Music stakes. With The Sir Douglas Quintet, Sahm effortlessly fused a variety of roots styles from country and soul to Tex-Mex, rock 'n' roll and beyond, captured over a series of wonderfully diverse records, culminating at the turn of the '70s.

Despite a muted LA Troubadour crowd, this top quality 1971 soundboard recording is dripping with the exact vibe one expects when digging into the SDQ. A half-hour set, it's a brief, but concise primer of what Sahm and his band were capable of at their peak, kicking off with a perfect run through *Nuggets* classic 'She's About A Mover'. On a different tip, 'Be Real' is beautifully rolling, full-on-country, while the genuine hit 'Mendocino' showcases the brilliance of the quintet's secret weapon, organist Augie Meyers.

Ben Phillipson

Jim Griffin
The Signal (LP)

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This Floating World Is A Dream (LP)

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Lamp of the Universe
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CD reissue including unreleased material from the original sessions.

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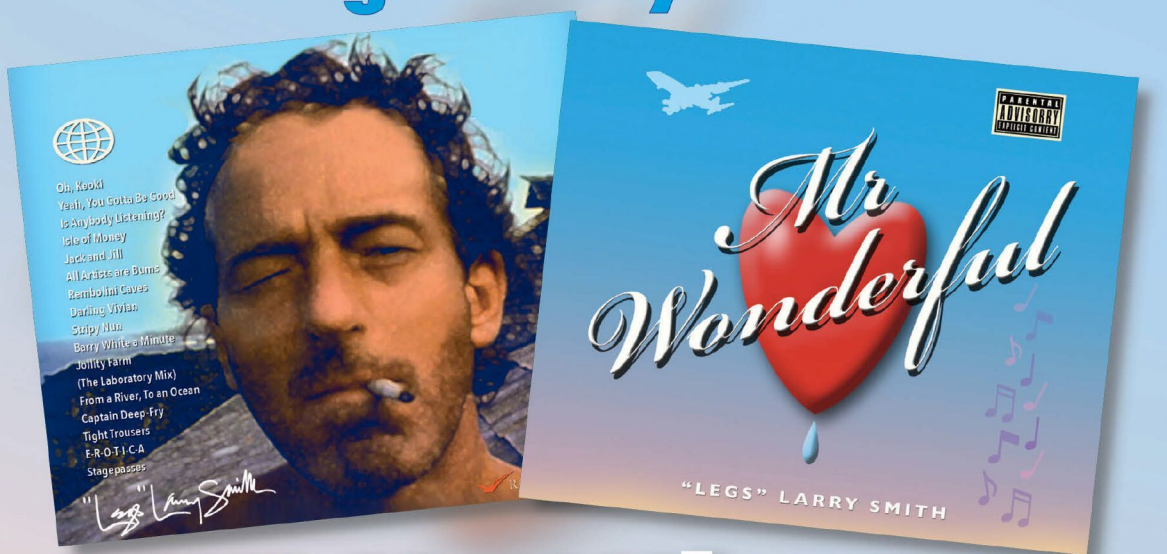

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Arranger John Cameron steps in front of the camera with CCS in 1970

SOM IMAGINÁRIO
Banda Da Capital
★★★★

FAR OUT RECORDINGS CD/LP

Famed as both key players in Brazil's Clube de Esquina movement of the early '70s and as Milton Nascimento's backing band, Som Imaginário's appetite for exploration and experimentation followed something of a parallel path to the manifestations of *Tropicalismo*.

Heard here on a previously unreleased live album recorded in Brasilia at a concert celebrating Nature Day in 1976, Som Imaginário give free reign to their near unclassifiable patchwork of MPB, progressive rock, psychedelia, jazz-fusion and rootsy folk in a truly spectacular performance. Guided by their elastic musicality and experimental instincts the band journey through memorably rich soundscapes in the contrasting contours of 'A Igreja Majestosa', 'Cafezais Sem Fim' and 'Armina', while the title track has them sounding like Frank Zappa trading blows with King Crimson. If this sounds like your bag be advised the CD edition of the album includes two additional live tracks recorded at Rio's Museu De Arte Moderna in '75.

Grahame Bent

STRUCTURE
Pop Music
★★★

SOMMOR LP

Not a library album *per se*, rather a set of near-instrumentals recorded by an ad-hoc band put together by flautist Bernard Wystraëte when tasked with making a "pop" album by Parisian label Artistes Français Associés in 1970.

Given Wystraëte's jazz and classical heritage, the resulting half-dozen pieces were never going to end up as straight pop. Instead, he accommodates modal-jazz, eastern tones, Brazilian heat and progressive rock grooves within a live group framework that adds flutes, piccolo, electric violin and various items of percussion to the standard set-up. Less nightclub-friendly than Eden Rose yet pre-empting Magma's adventures in fusion, *Pop Music* is probably closer to Nino Ferrer circa *Métronomie* and even Janko Nilovic's early '70s library work. This edition comes in a thick cardboard sleeve containing reminiscences from Wystraëte himself and a download code for a hideously rare '71 single.

Andy Morten

THEE GLOOMIES
Thee Gloomies
★★★★

DANGERHOUSE SKYLAB LP

First heard on a now revered, hard to locate six-song EP recorded at London's Toerag studios in 1993, Thee Gloomies were teenage cavemen from France playing brutal mid-60s garage-punk which, a few years previously, was being rediscovered on the *Back From The Grave* and *Garage Punk Unknowns* compilations, as well as by those (then) living, breathing modern day groups The Chesterfield Kings, Gravedigger V, Tell-Tale Hearts and many others.

Check out these fuzzed-to-the-max readings of The Alarm Clocks' 'No Reason To Complain', Murphy & The Mob's 'Born Loser' and The Illusions' 'City Of People' (featuring Babz Otica of Diaboliks and Frat Shack infamy) rubbing shoulders with their own variations, among them 'Disco Trash' and 'Russian Song'. The album closes out with the smashingly crude cruncher 'By My Side', originally unleashed on the world by Australian punk deities The Elois in '67. Pressed on sickly green vinyl that comes wrapped in suitably garish sleeve art.

Lenny Helsing

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Brown Acid: The Sixteenth Trip
★★★★

RIDINGEASY LP

Another blast of pure uncut *Brown Acid* and another truckload of lost, forgotten and passed over heavy rarities from the North American heartland of the late '60s and '70s crashes through the door. The trips keep piling up and, despite this now being the 16th hit, the strength of the dose still feels every bit as sweet as it did on earlier instalments of this most compelling of long-running series.

The spectacular seven-minute opening bombast of 'Shuckin' And Jivin'' from none other than the mighty Seeds is riff-drenched psych from start to finish. Issued as a single in 1972 this is definitely The Seeds as you've never heard them before. Elsewhere, Nothing's 'Young Generation', Macbeth's 'Freight Train' and Attack's 'Dreams' touch on everything from tight, funk-edged rock, primal backwoods fuzz and the regulation booming Blue Cheer-esque acid onslaught.

Grahame Bent

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Destination Freeway
★★★★

BEAR FAMILY CD

One of the prime subjects in American music is the worship of the internal combustion engine and this collection of songs is a fine tribute to those who feel the need to go cruising the highways in a big block chunk of Detroit tin.

Recorded primarily between 1950 and '63 *Destination Freeway* kicks off with Dinah Shore extolling the delights of the Chevrolet and goes on to bemoan the misery of a 'Flat Tire' as sung by The Del Vikings (with a heavy debt to The Coasters) before emphasising the pulling power of a flash motor with Don Elliott's 'Long Black Automobile'. The 33-track disc has been skilfully researched and curated and, whilst avoiding the instrumental and vocal car odes of the surf-era outfits, these selections cover country, rockabilly, crooning pop and even some hopped-up jazz to underline the almost fetishistic importance of the automobile in American culture.

Henry Hutton

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Echo Neuklang (Neo-Kraut Sounds 1981-2003)
★★★★

BUREAU B CD/2-LP

It's been a busy time for the folks at bureau b as their back catalogue continues to grow exponentially. Having established themselves as expert purveyors of some of the most pivotal kosmische music, the label's new compilation investigates that legacy's ongoing influence on the new vanguard of electronic musicians.

As the title suggests the focus is on "new", but this is a broad remit. As Andreas Dorau, one of the album's compilers, states, "the only common denominator is that it's free music, different music". Featuring tracks from '80s artists such as Rheingold and their wistful sonic landscape 'Strahlende Zukunft', who grew up in the shadow of the golden age of kosmische, Echo Neuklang brings things up to date with recent artists including To Rococo Rot and Kreidler – musicians more remote in terms of time and place. This is a wonderful assortment of electronic treats, reminding us just how universal and inspirational this music continues to be.

Sarah Gregory

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Folk, Funk & Beyond: The Arrangements Of John Cameron
★★★★★

ACE CD

The personification of the debonair, in-demand London musical man about town, John Cameron's name has become synonymous with pastoral, flowery '60s pop (the folk), dense, brassy '70s rock (the funk) and genre-defining library recordings (the beyond).

This collection makes a good fist of condensing his hundreds of arrangement credits into 24 tracks. The opening title theme from 1969's *Kes* sees Cameron evoke the film's dour optimism via his favoured

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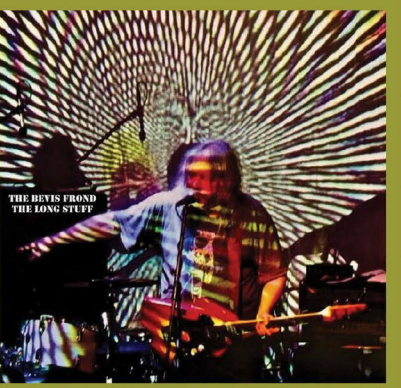

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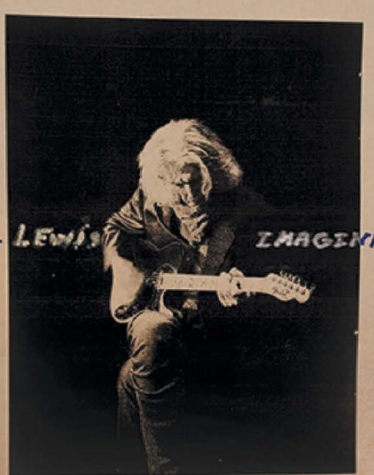

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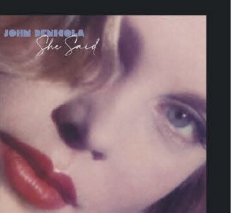

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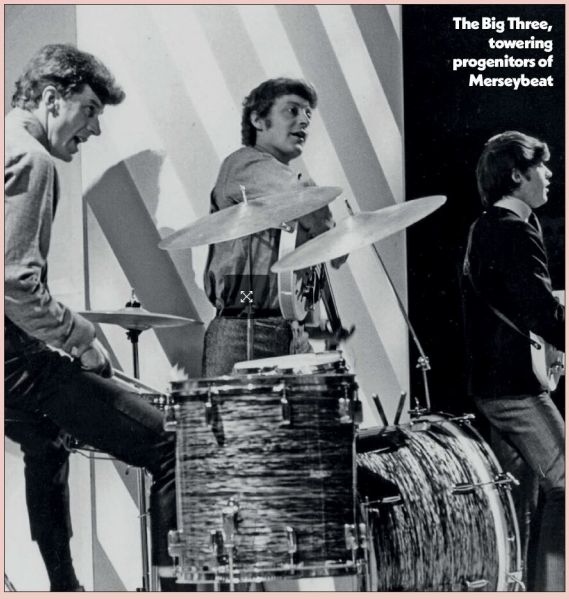
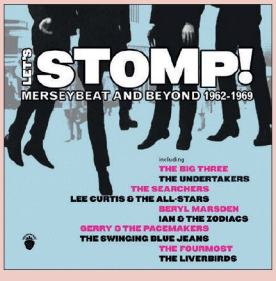

The Big Three, towering progenitors of Merseybeat

Twisting By The Pool



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Let's Stomp!: Merseybeat And Beyond 1962-1969
★★★★

STRAWBERRY 3-CD BOX SET

As Merseybeat falls further back in collective memory, it seems partly misinterpreted by those who missed its impact in real time. Sixty years on, it's worth reconsidering the wider Liverpool scene of that decade, especially since many of the artists now seem restricted to footnotes. *Let's Stomp!* does a stellar job of redressing some of the imbalance, reminding us how much worthwhile music stemmed from the city during the decade.

There is all the depth and authority you would expect on a three-disc set containing nearly 90 tracks. Following chronologically, we begin with the scene's commercial peak. Inevitably, The Beatles are represented via the songs they gave away (Billy J Kramer, The Fourmost, Cilla Black) and though their early covers repertoire frequently crops up, with fairly mixed results, their absence actually helps establish a fresher viewpoint. The other notables who you would expect are all here, with the likes of The Undertakers and The Big Three well represented by their best 45s, alongside wonderful pop curios like the heavy stomp and falsetto of The Chants' 'I Don't Care'.

Inevitably, the music and the productions get progressively more interesting as we go on. The Breakaways' 'That's How It Goes' could be the ultimate big-beat British girl-group record, while The Searchers' evergreen 'When You Walk In The Room' rings out loud and clear, anticipating the folk-rock boom a year early.

By the time ex-Searcher Tony Jackson's tough-as-nails take on 'Fortune Teller' ushers in the third disc, we're in stranger waters. Freakbeat belters from The Kirkbys, Lomax Alliance and Wimple Winch may feel familiar, less so The Thoughts' fine, full-bloodied stab at the Ray Davies rarity 'All Night Stand'. Joe Meek fans will need this too, with a number of alternate versions of his productions for Liverpool acts. The Maracas' unreleased 'The Drummer' is eccentrically brilliant; Meek placing the sticksman way ahead in the mix over a charmingly tentative performance. It's a more-than-decent tune as well as being a fabulous period piece, true enough for much of the contents of *Let's Stomp!*.

Ben Phillipson

weapons – lighter-than-air flutes, weeping oboes, melancholy strings – before we're transported to Donovan's 'The Observation', swinging social commentary transformed into patchouli-scented hot-house jazz by Cameron's deft piano playing and modal woodwinds. Françoise Hardy, Lionel Bart, The Flirtations, Hot Chocolate and others follow, as do two of Cameron's best-loved library cuts. Sublime. Volume Two can't be far away.

Andy Morten

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Once Again We Are Children Of The Sun
★★★★

BBE MUSIC 3-LP

Opening with the mellow groove of Will & James Ragar's 'As The Day Grows Tired', Paul Hillery follows up his recognised *We Are Children Of The Sun* collection with another 19 sun-bleached tracks from the '70s and '80s, and even a couple of more recent additions of chilled-out sounds that will enable clarity of mind without SSRIs.

Just listen to William Eaton Ensemble's 'Kayenta Crossing' for proof. The song's shakuhachi flute and 26-string guitar beat Prozac any day. It's from 1989, but you'd never know. Circling folk, jazz-funk, disco and goodtime vibes, it's all about mood rather than genre, so along with the anthemic hippie testament of Cunningham Corner's '71 freak anthem 'Free And Easy' comes the smooth mega '80s sheen of Corill's 'Soul Shadow', all slap bass, jazzy guitar soloing and DX7 synths. Bringing things up to date is The Greg Foat Group featuring Kat Barnard's excellent reading of Jackson C Frank's 'Milk And Honey'.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Silberland Vol 2: The Driving Side Of Kosmische Musik 1974-1984
★★★★

BUREAU B CD/2-LP

Does the world really need another kosmiche/krautrock compilation, you may ask yourself? With releases like *The Driving Side of Kosmische Musik 1974-1984*, the answer is a resounding yes.

While last year's *Silberland Vol 1* dabbled with the psychedelic, this latest offering from the bureau b label turns its attention to "the driving side" of kosmische – rarely has a title been more fitting for the propulsive rhythms and incessant singularity that is so inherent wthin this music. Leading the charge of some of Germany's greatest underground heavyweights, Harald Grosskopf's 'Eve On The Hill' and Conrad Schnitzler's 'Elektroklang' highlight kosmische's pivotal role in the development of techno, while the ground-breaking experimental chaos so characteristic of playful *avant-gardists* Faust is represented on 'Juggernaut.' There's some wonderful motorik pseudo-drone from Moebius (he of Cluster and Harmonia) working with acclaimed producer Conny Plank, not forgetting Serge Blenner's enigmatic 'Phonique'. Marvellous and vital.

Sarah Gregory

WILL & JAMES RAGAR
Will & James Ragar One
★★★★

BBE MUSIC 2-LP

If NYC and the London were breaking new ground with scratchy guitars, synths and short hair, the hippie ethos lived on in more remote places, like the region of Texas in which these two flowing-haired brothers were based.

Congratulations to Paul Hillery for unearthing this rare record, long on his wants list. Musically it's a subtle mix of delicately played acoustic guitars in a jazz/folk style. Many of the songs carry on the tradition David Crosby was laying down a decade before. 'Melting Pop' is a gorgeous instrumental, very much in the 'Wooden Ships' vein. Flutes, jazzy electric solos, mellow, blissed-out freak vibes all the way. There's also a flavour of yacht-rock on such carefree jazzy songs as 'Forever', and the TV theme worthy ballad 'Hidden Away'. It's such a pity that the duo didn't progress much beyond playing bars. A future classic.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

THE YARDBIRDS
Live In Sweden 1967
★★★★

REPERTOIRE CD

If there's one thing that's lacking with this vintage radio broadcast, it's the fact that it boasts a total playing time of a mere 27 minutes. Not choosing to hang about the latter-day four-piece incarnation of The Yardbirds shoehorn eight songs into those 27 minutes.

Taped for *Popgaster I Stockholm* in April 1967 this high-quality recording captures Jimmy Page excelling in his role as the band's sole guitarist following the departure of Jeff Beck. Besides the quality of the recording and the power of the performances, the choice of material is also interesting. Sure, 'Shapes Of Things', 'Heart Full Of Soul' and 'Over Under Sideways Down' get spirited airings, but it's more than worthwhile hearing the band tackle the Hugg brothers' 'Mister You're A Better Man Than I' and Dylan's 'Most Likely You Go Your Way (And I'll Go Mine)' before cutting loose with a weather-beaten closing take on Bo Diddley's 'I'm A Man'.

Grahame Bent

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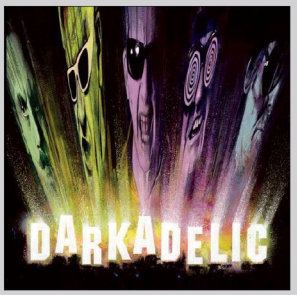

THE DAMNED
Darkadelica

★★★★

EARMUSIC CD/LP

The return of The Damned to full-time activity and increasing respect from press and public over the last decade or so has been heartening to see. Punk pioneers, they swiftly transcended that genre's boundaries, embracing psychedelia, garage-rock, powerpop and goth as the '70s and '80s progressed. *Black Album/Strawberries*-era bassist Paul Gray rejoined singer Dave Vanian and guitarist Captain Sensible in 2017, while Monty Oxymoron has been on keyboards since 1996 and drummer Will Taylor signed up last year. Now on their 12th album, the follow-up to 2018's Tony Visconti-produced *Evil Spirits*, The Damned are a solid unit once again, as their onstage chemistry surely proves, with songs to spare and hellfire still burning in their bellies.

Opening track 'The Invisible Man' comes on like a steampunk Stooges, riding abrupt time changes into a trippy spoken word, fairground middle eight. Sensible's 'Bad Weather Girl' could've come straight from *Strawberries*, while 'Beware Of The Clown' shows how certain politicians make Grimly Fiendish' seem like kids' stuff. On 'Western Promise', Vanian taps into the lone gunfighter, singing cowboy character that's always been part of his persona beneath the dominant vampire motif, on a surprisingly tender love song with a lovely, mournful trumpet and keyboard extended instrumental coda.

It's not all perfect: 'Motorcycle Man' and 'Girl I'll Stop At Nothing' are each about two minutes too long, and a song about Gary Glitter was always going to raise eyebrows, especially one admitting to still loving his music even while abhorring his crimes. 'Leader Of The Gang' is more a sad shake of the head than an outright condemnation, but it's also one of the strongest tunes on the record.

The best is left to last, however, as each side closes with one of the band's trademark gothic anthems. 'Wake The Dead' is a hard-rocking epic, but the closing 'Roderick' is the blood-red cherry on the cake. More Barry Ryan than Bauhaus, it's 'The Fall Of The House of Usher' in miniature, gloriously OTT but played with a straight bat. The Damned walk amongst us once more; long may they cast no shadow.

Ben Graham

The Damned, 2023 model, with Dave Vanian and Captain Sensible (second and third right)

PHOTO: TIMO JÄGER

THE ANDERSON COUNCIL
The Devil, The Tower, The Star, The Moon

★★★

JEM CD

That's a clever idea, deriving your name from old bluesmen Pink Anderson and Floyd Council. Head councillor Peter Horvath may take the late '60s scene as his musical inspiration, but his band eschew the 24-hour-happenings favoured by that other outfit with the same name-generating technique in favour of some Marquee-style maximum R&B, with some American powerpop polish and '70s mod revivalist snarkiness thrown in for good measure. Air guitarists, expect much windmilling and leaping with knees and ankles locked.

Every track is a hook-laden potential 45 – I instantly succumbed to opener 'Toronto Tarot' – but this album's biggest surprise is how fresh it sounds. Long-time favourites of Little Steven's Underground Garage radio show, this is the sixth long player by a band that have been running since 1999 and frankly have no business sounding so exhilaratingly young.

Peter Gallagher

BROWN SPIRITS
Solitary Transmissions

★★★★

SOUL JAZZ CD/LP

The reverberations of vintage krautrock have been felt in all corners of the globe and, on the evidence of this startling debut album, certainly down under in Oz. Melbourne's Brown Spirits are a power trio with a difference – a cosmic power trio no less!

In terms of stylistic references and interstellar co-ordinates this is very much a Can meets classic Hawkwind take on kosmiche rock. Recorded on quarter-inch analogue tape, *Solitary Transmissions* is a vertigo-inducing blast of hyper active circular drum patterns and effects-laden guitar and keyboards which signposts everyone from Hendrix, Faust, Neu!, Gong and Acid Mothers Temple as fellow voyagers.

Specialists in gravity-free, mind-melting explosions of trance, deep psych, and experimental space jams, Brown Spirits are captured at their most powerful on the album's two longest tracks 'Solar Kollektiv' and the 13-minute 'Who's At The Door'.

Grahame Bent

CALIBRO 35
Nouvelles Aventures

★★★★

VIRGIN MUSIC ITALY / RECORD KICKS CD/LP

Calibro 35 is back with a raucous album that deserves the loudest of speakers. *Nouvelles Aventures* is an exciting addition to the Italian outfit's already-fantastic canon. In recent years, the funk band have been busy paying homage to their maestro Ennio Morricone and creating the music for the Italian TV series *Blanca*. Now they're back with an explosion of original work that highlights their massive range of moods and sonic landscapes.

With suspenseful songs like 'Eteretaco', and 'Extraordinaire', the album deserves to be put on the big screen (here's looking at you, music supervisors). Though it seems at first like the songs would be right at home in a booming Christopher Nolan film, Morricone's influence – his ability to capture subtle beauty in small refrains – starts to seep through. Calibro 35's easy play with funk drives the plot, while their love of alternative jazz and classical music offers sombre subtext to the ever-swelling groove.

Tess Carges

JEFF CLARKE
Locust

★★★

BRETFORD LP

We're used to hearing Jeff Clarke surrounded by a thick wall of noise, melting country roots and unrepentant blasts of garage-rock with Black Lips, the group he joined some five years ago after founding Demon's Claws in 2003. Talking to *Shindig!* for a career-spanning piece that appeared in issue #136, the Lips' Jared Swilley enthused how naturally adept at country Clarke's writing and playing are – he comes from "the Texas of Canada", he pointed out.

We find that spirit at the core of this solo offering, recorded not in the studio but in a forest, in one session. Clarke's acoustic side is evocatively dishevelled and stripped-down, and the gutsy Western smarts of 'Better Glass' provide Locust's most instantly memorable moment. He seems to be looking up at the earthy, up-close intimacy of a Blaze Foley, interspersing it with an undulating vocal approach that often evokes young Dylan ('Weird Ways').

Camilla Aisa

CRAYOLA EYES
Gushing
★★★★
LA MUNAI DIGITAL

This sextet from Jakarta, Indonesia is immersed in psych, shoegaze, neo-krautrock and all things black leather-clad, judging from the sounds embodied in their debut LP.

The swirling groove of 'Teaching Of Truth' mixes sombre, chanted vocals with strong pop dynamics, while 'Blacker Than Coal' is insistent, widescreen dream-rock carving a straight highway through your third eye, passing The Horrors in the fast lane and meeting Moon Duo at the bypass. Guitars grind, '80s synths shimmer, and Yasintha Pattiasina's violin adds an extra touch of grandeur. 'Spectrum (For Sonic Boom)' wears its influences on its sleeve, as Crayola Eyes play convincingly at being little Spacemen, while 'Love Traffic' is all echo and tambourine, like an indie ballad from the Jesus & Mary Chain era. Their title song even adds cheeky 'Sympathy For The Devil' whoops to its driving mirror-shades ramalama. They don't score highly for originality, but full marks for execution.
Ben Graham

DAYDREAM REVIEW
Leisure
★★★
SIDE HUSTLE LP

The generous layers of pastel sound might suggest the work of a collective, but the music of Daydream Review is the product of one multi-instrumentalist, Elijah Montez.

Debut album *Leisure* finds him opposing the crushing nature of capitalism with hypnotic sonic remedies, offering a swirling whirlwind of retrodelic synths, warped guitars and soothingly narcotic vocals as temporary (but still welcome) remedy.

As it traverses lush psychedelia and glittering dream pop, the album brings to mind the likes of Tame Impala and Mr Elevator; it is at once nostalgic and very *au courant*. A "less is more" approach certainly doesn't apply to the rich sonic tapestry but could have benefitted the tracklist: *Leisure* is a charming and promising debut whose 13 tracks can be almost overwhelming, which somehow feels like a slight disservice to strong singles such as 'No Eternity' and 'Have You Found What You're Looking For?'.
Camilla Aisa

GLITTER WIZARD
Kiss The Boot
★★★★
KITTEN ROBOT LP

Glitter Wizard are a rock band from the San Francisco Bay Area that have released four albums since 2011. A "rock" band in the truest '70s sense, their music is informed by Alice Cooper, The Stooges, Uriah Heep, Sweet, Slade and anyone who sings about wizards.

Kiss The Boot is a joy from start to finish. Five of the songs are original band compositions, opening number 'She's A Star', the best of the batch, a real rave-up reminiscent of Mud's 'Tiger Feet'. Similarly, 'Sugar Beat' out-stomps The Glitter Band whilst 'Pogo Tonight' summons up The Sweet, nicks a riff from The Who and is sprinkled with synth fairy dust. The real showstopper here however is the inspired cover of David Bowie's 'Suffragette City' performed in the style of The Glitter Band, complete with an oafish, yob chorus of "Hey Man". Just how glam is it? None more glam.
Richard Allen

GREASY KINGDOM
Greasy Kingdom
★★★★
HIDEOUS MINK LP

There's something very appropriate about this Italian trio's moniker. Every song on their debut (via Brighton's up-and-coming Hideous Mink label) feels oiled, slippery and even a little unsavoury. But just like a transport café fry-up, they're also dangerously addictive.

The gloopy synths, nursery-rhyme structures and stomping rhythms betray a grounding in junkshop glam, with queasy opener 'Mr Pony Rainbow' recalling Cockney Rebel's 'Mr Soft'. 'Forever Dancer' marries acoustic verses to a cut-price ELO chorus, before the middle eight dives into mellow Philly funk, while late-period T Rex climb aboard a fairground waltzer for 'Creepers' and Lieutenant Pigeon meet Cardiacs on 'Oh Solitude'. But despite the off-kilter and decidedly off-message single, 'Money For Drugs', Greasy Kingdom are no novelty act, with the African rhythms of 'Hallya' heralding a final trio of impressive slow burners. Shaping yesterday's cast-offs into unique, alluring new constructions, Greasy Kingdom are pop mechanics of the first order.
Ben Graham

CORY HANSON
Western Cum
★★★★
DRAG CITY CD/LP

As opener 'Wings' hits you, it is immediately clear: Cory Hanson's latest album is far more inviting than the title – or the sleeve – would lead you to believe. Compared to the slow-burning, Americana-tinged pensiveness of 2021's *Pale Horse Rider*, *Western Cum* is fittingly vigorous and cocky. In lieu of mournful pedal steel sounds there's fast-paced, busy noodling.

'Twins' starts as an acoustic country-rock number before the electric solo takes it into '80s rock territory; lengthy 'Driving Through Heaven' brings forth a deluge of prog-adjacent riffs. There's something of Richard Thompson hidden in the depths of standout 'Housefly', a rocker that pairs angelic vocals with amp-inflaming layers of guitar and evokes old friend Ty Segall. When closer 'Motion Sickness' appears, it's like a break-of-dawn moment of contemplation: things can finally slow down. It fades away as some sort of electric revue you'll be hoping to catch again soon.
Camilla Aisa

Slippery customers
Greasy Kingdom
PHOTO: GRAHAM HARDY

EDGAR JONES
Reflections Of A Soul Dimension
★★★★

STEROPAR LP

Making new music sound old is not a recent or rare phenomenon, but it takes a special talent to get it right. Thankfully, Liverpool's Edgar Jones has. For his seventh LP, the former Stairs man has dialled in on mid-60s soul obscurities, specifically the sub-genre known as Big City Soul.

Aided by Wirral-based producer Steve Parry, Jones has turned in a 12-song love letter to the type of northern soul made by major label studios and name producers. Plenty of stirring string arrangements, a touch of brass, vibraphones, tambourines, and those all-important impassioned vocals. The songs hit the spot too, ranging from floor-fillers to heartbreakers and pop-soul ballads. Best of the bunch is 'Nothing Can Change', its soaring melody and lyrical melodrama easily passing for a lost Bacharach & David composition. Non-album single 'Torture' is also worth searching out, an exploration of love's downsides set against urgent strings and snappy beats.

Duncan Fletcher

KYRON
Dreaming Eden
★★★★

BELBURY MUSIC LP

The title of Beautify Junkyards frontman João Branco Kyron's latest solo offering couldn't be more perfect: *Dreaming Eden* is a sequence of reveries translated into otherworldly electronic sketches.

Tracks often open and close with bubbling sounds, creating the effect of an immersion in altered, beatific states of mind; vintage synthesisers and archival sonic fragments scope inner and outer worlds at the same time (it's only when closer 'Fade Into Transparency' ends that we start intercepting human voices – a signal of imminent, blurry awakening). You could describe 'Slipstream Of Memory' as Angelo Badalamenti soundtracking a Chagall fantasy. 'Tidal Pulsations' is another highlight, contemporary hauntology at its dreamiest. The Eden component is also significant, especially when you compare this record to Kyron's 2021 release *Ascending Plume Of Faces*, with its eerie, foggy folk-horror feel. Whether he's exploring sonic depths dark or (in this case) celestial, he conjures endlessly inviting aural journeys.

Camilla Aisa

NOVELTY ISLAND
Wallsend Weekend Television
★★★★★

NINE X NINE CD/LP

Quite extraordinary. Liverpudlian producer and songwriter Tom McConnell won great plaudits for his debut album *How Are You Coping With This Century?* in 2021, but he'd already written most of this follow-up before that; 80 songs to be precise, and trying to distil them into a manageable collection was reportedly driving him mad.

Well, here we have it, and the final 11 tracks he chose are crafted as crisply and imaginatively as anything anyone's ever recorded. McConnell's genius is in combining flawless melodies with unexpected twists and turns with beautifully constructed harmonies and instrumental breaks. Try to imagine Jellyfish colliding with Bread. Try also to imagine Foxygen (McConnell's voice is quite similar to Sam France's) in a love-in with Sparks. It's all there: the madness, the thrill and the adventure. It's hard to choose a definitive highlight but the closer 'Balloons' come pretty high on the list, being a kaleidoscopic epic of woozy psychedelia.

Chris Twomey

MAYA ONGAKU
Approach To Anima
★★★★★

GURUGURU BRAIN LP

INK LIKE A KEY LP

Hailing from the small Japanese island of Enoshima, three-piece Maya Ongaku are releasing their debut full-length after supporting Kikagaku Moyo (their label bosses at Guruguru Brain) on last year's farewell Tokyo show.

Like the already missed Moyo, they combine and defy genres with trip-friendly results. What they pursue on *Approach To Anima* is slow-paced catharsis, an endlessly fascinating quilt of sound that melts acid-folk, hazy psych, ambient and free-flowing jazz – psychedelia, yes, but in the etymological sense of the term. Song titles could hardly be more telling: 'Water Dream', 'Pillow Song', 'Description Of A Certain Something'... they're elegantly paired with natural sounds and they quietly demand full attention. This is an album for silent nights or sun-blessed mornings, for long walks where landscape and stillness are the only companions, and for moments of self-discovery that are equally open to triggering revelations and offering respite.

Camilla Aisa

PERMANENT CLEAR LIGHT
Right As Rain
★★★★

SULATRON LP

THINK LIKE A KEY LP

It's an odd saying, after all. Rain may be right, as in natural, but it's often something of a downer. This Finnish three-piece's third album may appear on the surface to be pleasant pastoral pop, awash in Mellotrons and mellow melodies, with laidback vocals, acoustic guitars and gentle percussion conjuring the soporific sensation of drifting down an endless sleepy river, but there's an electric serpent in this arcadian Eden, represented perhaps by the distorted E-bow guitar that snakes through the spare instrumental section of 'Snowing Skyways' like unexpected Canterbury dub.

Indeed, by the moody chamber-folk of 'Lonely Gardener' a definite sense of unease has entered the picture, confirmed by the snarling '80s pulse, sunglasses-after-dark vocoder and synth of 'I'm Gonna Turn Your Castles Into Sand'. The ominous nine-minute instrumental 'Iron Gate' seals it: in the best progressive rock tradition, summer turns to autumn, and cloudy days are here again.

Ben Graham

THE REVERBERATIONS
Half Remembered Dreams
★★★★

BELUGA LP

Portland, Oregon outfit The Reverberations have been leaving various clues regarding some deeper dabblings of the psychedelic kind – as opposed to their usual garage and folk-rock stylings – for, at least, their last couple of releases.

Half Remembered Dreams appears to signal the first flowering of the group in full on psych-pop mode. The likes of 'Fly My Kite', 'Daydreaming' and 'Kaleidoscope' are perhaps more in tune with the poppy side of things as heard on '67 Beatles, Strawberry Alarm Clock and Nirvana sides than the more cerebral dimensions inhabited by The 13th Floor Elevators, Pretty Things and July for that matter. On the droning, scene-setting opener 'Oscillation', they doff their caps in the direction of Silver Apples, whilst 'Color Coded Candy Canes', and especially 'Cosmic Gaze' favour the tasty, trippy spangle of *Notorious*-era Byrds. What's next, one wonders?

Lenny Helsing

MARCO ROSSI
The Sincerest Form Of Flattery
★★★★

FRUITS DE MER CD

The *Shindig!* scribe previously invited you to *Enlarge Your Johnson* with his group Cheese, so his one-man band's bedroom recordings aren't getting any special treatment here. But when we tell you they're the grooviest collection of psych-pop and sunshine-pop covers you'll hear this year you can trust our objectivity. Then when you see the line-up (including The Left Banke, Spirit, Nazz, Association, Strawberry Alarm Clock) we can almost hear you drooling. Except Rossi being Marco, he's selected some of their most obscure recordings (Kaptain Kopter, anyone?). Cheeky bastard.

After enjoying his "mixtape" with songs of PF Sloan, Paul Williams (twice!), Wil Malone (Orange Bicycle) and We The People wrapped in a Todd Rundgren-esque wall-of-sound powerpop production and "a Tom Verlaine-style guitar solo" dropped into hippy anthem 'Get Together', Rossi's hopes that you'll also hunt down and enjoy the originals will have succeeded.

Jeff Penczak

SIR BOBBY JUKEBOX
In The Organ Loft At Midnight
★★★★

TOPICAL ISLAND DIGITAL

Love the format. Eighteen "bubblegum" cards depicting drawings by Bobby Aherne, age 9-10, on the front, and the lyrics to the latest song-set by Sir Bobby Jukebox AKA Bobby Aherne, age 31-34, on the reverse. Also included is a code to access the album; there is no vinyl edition, no CD version, and no

Continues over

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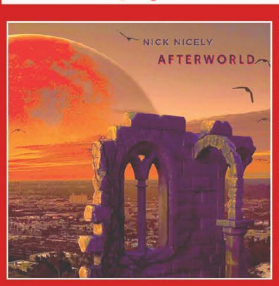
psychedelia, krautrock, prog rock, acid folk - classic, long-lost and new

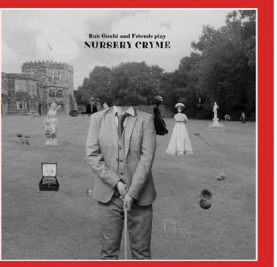


nick nicely
'AFTERWORLD' LP

Nick selects a collection of demos and alternate mixes from his archives…
"An exhilarating roller-coaster ride through Nicely's creative process with all the warts, kitchen sink embellishments and musical volte-faces left intact. Jeff Penczak, Shindig!

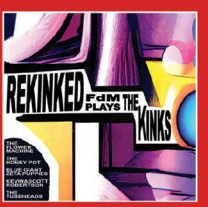
ROB GOULD & FRIENDS
'NURSERY CRYME' LP + CD

Last time, Rob remade the whole of VDGG's 'Pawn Hearts', this time he takes on the prog rock classic 'Nursery Cryme', which he dusts down and rebuilds in great style… From 'The Musical Box' to 'The Fountain Of Salmacis' and 'The Return Of The Giant Hogweed', enjoy it all over again.



MARCO ROSSI
'The Sincerest Form Of Flattery' CD

Shindig's very own recreates a dozen slices of classic and long-lost psych... songs originally recorded by The Nazz, Strawberry Alarm Clock, NRBQ, Spirit, and We The People, to name but a few



'REKINKED' 8" EP

The Kinks are fondly remembered by Fruits de Mer with an 8"lathe-cut containing four covers...'I Need You', 'See My Friends', 'Shangri-La' and '(Do You Remember) Walter'; artists include The Flower Machine, Crystal Jacqueline and Icarus Peel,

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standalone digital copy. You gotta get the cards to get the songs. Very cool.

So, what's the album like? Well, Mr Jukebox doesn't do sad, so this one challenges the listener not to tap their toe, not to sing along, not to break out in goofy grins. This is '60s toytown psych filtered through '80s electropop; think 'Excerpt From A Teenage Opera' written on a handheld Casio keyboard. 'In The Nettles' is a Lloyd Cole-fronted bubblegum band, 'Tropical Bird Lingo' an early East Berlin version of Erasure, while 'Fortitude Valley' and 'Hire-a-Heart' are snatches of a summertime daydream.

Peter Gallagher

ELIZA SKELTON

The Lookerer

★★★★

BLUE MATTER CD/LP

It's always a delight to review music by an artist who is unfamiliar, but then proceeds to blow your socks off. Multi-instrumentalist and singer-songwriter Eliza Skelton has managed that here with her delightful brand of contemporary folk – its foundations firmly based in the '70s tradition.

Skelton has been on the performance circuit for years as part of the musically occult Oddfellows Casino with David Bramwell and (fun fact) she's also the brainchild of Sing-Along-A-Wicker-Man! No stranger to the studio, *The Lookerer* is Skelton's first solo album – a superb set of songs that tap into the British female singer-songwriters of yesteryear with Skelton's authentic and rich vocal sitting atop delicate instrumental backing. Sometimes it's singular folk, pure and simple as appears on 'Above Whitehawk Hill', but elsewhere Skelton's fellow musicians bring a more contemporary sensation of dreamlike freak-folk – just listen to 'The Time Traveller'. An entrancingly good debut.

Sarah Gregory

CK SMITH

CK Smith

★★★★

BANDCAMP DIGITAL

From Glasgow via St Leonards, CK Smith (Kevin to his friends) may be better known to our readers as guitarist with garage champions The Baron Four. His debut solo album, however, takes inspiration from the British folk revival (Celtic division), though Smith is happy to mix together styles in the service of a good song.

On 'Shelter' his haunting, minor-key vocals and finger-picked guitar bed in with bass, drums, cello and violin, rising to an effective orchestrated climax, while 'Inside Out' sways like The Coral's psychedelic shanties, with electric guitar and keyboards adding texture. Faithful renditions of trad tunes 'Hares On The Mountain' and 'Black Is The Colour' sit alongside the jazzy folk-pop bounce of 'I Got Your Love', redolent of Donovan circa 'Sunny Goodge Street', the kitchen sink Kinks of 'Let Down' and the Bert Jansch-flavoured 'The Pilgrim'. No folk purism here, then; just melodic acoustic songwriting at its best.

Ben Graham

Brock 'n' roll! Hawkwind seize the future

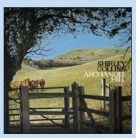
Returning Legends

SHIRLEY COLLINS

Archangel Hill

★★★★

DOMINO CD/LP



Shirley Collins' place in the British folk canon is of course assured, which makes her late career renaissance even more welcome. The *Shirley Inspired* compilation from 2015, featuring songs she'd made popular covered by a wide-ranging cast of bands and singers, helped bring Collins' work to a new generation, and paved the way for recent albums *Lodestar* (2016) and *Heart's Ease* (2020).

As she approaches her 88th birthday, Shirley's plain unadorned singing style still imparts a quiet, gentle authority. There are new takes on old favourites including 'The Captain With The Whiskers' and 'Hares On The Mountain', but it's the new songs that satisfy most. 'High And Away' is a collaboration with Pip Barnes that was inspired by a passage from Shirley's book *America Over The Water*. The album's title track is its most poignant, being a heartfelt spoken homage to one of Collins' constant touchstones, her home county of Sussex.

Duncan Fletcher

HAWKWIND

The Future Never Waits

★★★★

CHERRY RED CD/2-LP

The return to form launched with 2012's *Onwards* shows no sign of abating with *The Future Never Waits*, Hawkwind's 35th studio album.

There are a couple of instant Hawk classics in 'The End', with its familiar Dave Brock chugging riffery, and the soaring, joyously triumphant stomp of 'Rama (The Prophecy)', while new territory is explored with 'Aldous Huxley' and 'They're So Easily Distracted'. With their prominent jazzy piano and cosmic swooshery, these tracks might best be described as late-night space-lounge. It is not without flaws – the trippy techno title track doesn't quite warrant its 10-minutes plus running time, with the intro to 'The Beginning' also overlong – but *The Future Never Waits* is another strong entry in the band's catalogue.

While not hitting the heights of *Somnia* (2021) and *Into The Woods* (2017), it makes a perfect thematic companion piece to 2016's *The Machine Stops*.

Peter Gallagher

JOANNA STERNBERG

I've Got Me

★★★★★

FAT POSSUM CD/LP

Joanna Sternberg wrote these songs in their New York room and played every instrument on the recordings. But *I've Got Me* is far from insular: it is as warm, witty, brutally honest, profound and reinvigorating as a talk with a favourite friend. It's beautiful music that possesses humour and a keen eye for detail, and never fails to connect on a deep level.

Sternberg's songs have roots in Yiddish theatre, Randy Newman ('I Will Be With You') and Elliott Smith. Each track triggers its own game of "this reminds me of" – 'Drifting On A Cloud' has something of Karen Dalton's delivery, the title track evokes Daniel Johnston, there are shades of Joanna Newsom and Connie Converse – but every listener will end up mentioning something or someone different: Joanna Sternberg sounds like nobody but themselves, the music is literate in an unaffected way. We're meeting a new, wonderfully idiosyncratic singer-songwriter great.

Camilla Aisa

TEENAGE WAITRESS

Your Cuckoo

★★★★

COLORAMA LP/CD/DL

Album two from Southampton singer-songwriter Daniel J Ash AKA Teenage Waitress is the work of an assured

Continues over

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18 NEWCASTLE BOILER SHOP
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24 BRIGHTON CONCORDE
25 ISLINGTON ASSEMBLY HALL
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MOJO 4/4 STARS - "CORNWELL'S STILL DOING THINGS HIS WAY AND OFTEN WITH STRIKING RESULTS"

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THE PRIMITIVES

Album Out Now

musical chameleon, lobbing melodic grenades while skipping through genres like a man on the run. Ash barely pauses for breath throughout *Your Cuckoo*. He's shaping up to be a pop alchemist par excellence with a knack for a self-deprecating lyric.

The opening 'Baby Blue''s gorgeous soft-pop/yacht-rock moves slide into smokey lounge funk with creamy Dave Gilmour licks. Seconds later we're into the pounding pop-punk of 'Maggie'. Just over a minute later it in turn kicks into the big synth-pop of 'Grey Sky', then the lovely (but dark-hearted) '80s prom-pop of 'Girl I Want You To Kill Me'. It doesn't let up, via the Badly Drawn Boy-ish 'Bedroom Waltz', the teenage reminiscence of 'Backseat' and bittersweet closer 'Salutations'. An album full of gleaming nest eggs.

Martin Ruddock

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Your Face Is A Mess: The Best Of Rebels Volume 4

★★★★★

RAVING POP BLAST CD/LP

Bristol's Raving Pop Blast is bang on target again with this latest *Best Of Rebels* volume. Most tracks on instalment number four offer thrills and excitement, some hard-hitting beat thumpers, plus one or two cuts with cool, slow-burning fuses.

Split roughly half and half between established names like The Beatpack and openers The Mourning After, alongside those largely unfamiliar within the modern garage and psych-based rock 'n' roll, punk, and surf pantheon. Outright favourites include the brilliant 'Hey, Hee, Hey', dreamed up by the frighteningly, humorously monikered David & The Lynched; the same stable also birthed the great Emergency Stairs, who valiantly attempt Dale Gregory & The Shouters' stompin' wailer 'Did Ya Need To Know'. And lest we forget, we also have AlterModerns, here attached to fellow Bristolian outsider Bruno. Their 'Hymn Sheet' is an unhinged blast of psycho-garage hoo-hah showcasing Bruno's wild, outta control screams.

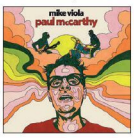
Lenny Helsing

MIKE VIOLA

Paul McCarthy

★★★★

LOJINX CD/LP



Best known as a producer (Ryan Adams, Andrew Bird, Panic! At The Disco, Jenny Lewis), Viola is also a mid-level artist who has steadily built a top-notch back catalogue over the last 20 years, merging powerpop, indie, and an occasional hint of metal. Genres become meaningless, however, when weighed up against the ideas and lyrical heft on this nine-song newie.

The title track imagines the world if celebrated American artist Paul McCarthy had been the fifth Beatle. 'Love Letters From A Childhood Sweetheart' could well be the most heart-breakingly poignant song you hear all year. 'Bill Viola' is imaginative dialogue with one's younger self covering ambition and what constitutes success and failure. It all comes dressed in sweet guitar lines and riffage. With friends Jake Sinclair and Brendon Urie on board, *Paul McCarthy* sounds like a record that was as much fun to make as it is to listen to.

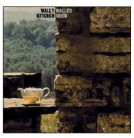
Duncan Fletcher

WALLY WALLER

Kitchen Rock

★★★★

THINK LIKE A KEY LP



Former Pretty Thing Wally Waller's lockdown venture goes from online to physical product, including a printed anecdote and lyric insert. Waller himself plays and produces everything, bringing a different level of perspective to these well-loved Pretties titles. They're more lo-fi than the original recordings, yet most everything is sharp and concise.

A fine version of rare 1967 gem 'Turn My Head' kicks things off, before continuing on through the luminescent glades of stunning '68 flipside 'Walking Through My Dreams', "The Rain Trilogy" 'In The Square', 'The Letter' and 'Rain', and the indefatigable 'Miss Fay Regrets' from *Parachute*. Curiously, there are no *SF Sorrow* tracks.

Unvarnished and, at times, hollow sounding, the overall approach also works well on the likes of 'Over The Moon' and 'The Sun'; exposing a raw underside while revealing each song's latent pop power. Exceptional playing throughout, which, alongside Wally's cool, rough-edged, rasping vocals, provides a fitting tribute to these Pretty Things songs, and reminds us of the isolation and strangeness of the pandemic.

Lenny Helsing

Teenage Waitress's Daniel J Ash will take your order now

PHOTO: MICHAEL BISSETT

RYAN WONG

The New Country Sounds Of Ryan Wong

★★★★

ROCKS IN YOUR HEAD LP

As part of San Francisco's Cool Ghouls, Ryan Wong came up trumps with 2021's *At George's Zoo*, a fabulous melange of psychedelia and garage-rock. For his new solo album, he's gone full country with a release that perhaps owes its title to classics from the likes of Hank Smith, Marvin Rainwater and Ray Charles. There are traces of acts like Ween and The Grateful Dead who dived cowboy boots first into the genre, albeit sprinkled with Ryan's own tongue-in-cheek lo-fi Ray Davies meets Moldy Peaches vibe.

The rodeo kicks off with the one-two punch of 'Day Dreamin'' and 'The Last Yeehaw', a gentle ballad followed by a rolling steel-pedal cut that pairs nicely with the music coming out of the Curation stable. Elsewhere, 'Shadow' reimagines The Kinks' 'Picture Book' for the Nashville scene and 'Lead Paint' has a lovely, woozy Burritos meets *Exile On Main Street* vibe. Rootin' tootin' and recommended fun.

Thomas Patterson

LISTEN TO THE
SHINDIG!
BROADCAST
ON MIXCLOUD

DREAM PHASES
Velvet Knife / Mrs Songbyrd
★★★
NOMAD EEL

After a decade of releases as Nacosta, the Los Angeles trio morphed into Dream Phases and have released four albums over the past five years.

Their latest single builds on the sun-drenched pop and dreamy harmonies of previous efforts with the slow groove of 'Velvet Knife', a lazy backyard hammock swing suitably sprinkled with sparkling guitars and swirling production that invites thousand-yard stares at clouds slowly drifting overhead. 'Mrs Songbyrd''s conspicuous (mis) spelling is a dead giveaway to the band's local influences, although the lads opt for a jaunty little toe-tapping singalong that'll have you dancing around the room with a glorious smile. The fun bodes well for a forthcoming album of more sunshine-pop with some edgy guitar work and snappy drumming to help us defeat the summer doldrums.

Jeff Penczak

THE GUY HAMPER TRIO FEATURING JAMES TAYLOR
All The Poisons In The Mud / Fire
★★★★
SPINOUT NUGGETS

Billy Childish and James Taylor go back a long way. Frequently appearing on the same bill back in the early '80s with The Milkshakes and Prisoners, it's only to be expected that one day the two heavyweights would pool their musical efforts.

The Guy Hamper Trio is Childish's baby, established almost 15 years ago now and boasting a line-up that includes the guitarist, his wife Julie on bass and original James Taylor Quartet drummer Wolf Howard. And now, they're joined by the Hammond maestro himself for some top-drawer instrumental rhythm 'n' blues. Released as a limited edition seven-inch, 'All The Poisons In The Mud' is taken from the Trio's 2022 album of the same name and it pops in all its Brian Auger-esque modernist glory. However, it's the B-side, a blistering cover of Hendrix's 'Fire', that's the absolute winner here – tight and uncompromising, it's a musical smack to the chops.

Sarah Gregory

MY GENERATION
Keep Left / Getting Out
★★★★
FAB

This lot came from Guernsey in The Channel Islands. Although 'My Generation' is a great and definitive song

Continues over

tracks

CAMILLA AISA rounds up this month's digital downloads and stray oddities

Welcome back to Tracks, where we're all about helping you get your summer groove on through thirst-quenching musical gems and smile-inducing returns. **GIRL RAY** are strong contenders for the title of ultimate-summer-feeling-encapsuled-in-one-verse, as they sing "Call me when you want to get a coke and sit on the wall" on new song **'Hold Tight'**. The rhythm, too, is perfectly summery, and decidedly irresistible. It's indie-pop's love letter to disco, and we're here for it.

We dig a good graphic premise. Looking at **SMOKEY ANGLE SHADES**' latest single, the nod is unmistakable: in this house we worship The Beach Boys' *Sunflower*. As for the music, **'And You Tied A Ribbon On It'** does not disappoint – there's '60s into '70s melodicism aplenty, a chorus that would make The Bee Gees and ELO equally proud, and generous doses of fuzz.

Raised in Bergen and based in Liverpool, **SARA WOLFF** crafts exquisite folk tunes tinged with *avant*-pop hues. Our current fave is the airy **'Don't Feed The Birds'**, where she sets to conjure and celebrate the magic that as children, we tend to find in the most disparate places... until our adult lives turn it into something that's invariably elusive.

File this under: new records we can't wait to spend hours and hours with. Led by El Kempner, **PALEHOUND** make indie guitar music that blends intensely intimate lyricism with headbang-worthy hooks, and rock with the kind of sonic assault power trios have perfected better than anyone else. Take **'The Clutch'**, for instance, and try not to have it permanently stuck in your head.

Lately there's been a good deal of songs pondering the peaks and valleys (and frequent oddities) of life as an artist – as a touring musician. Irish singer-songwriter **BRIGID MAE POWER** encapsulates a lot of those often-contrasting feelings on **'Counting Down'**, a typically haunting piece of lulling folk-pop.

Speaking of haunting folk, we have certainly not forgotten about the modern classic that is **JULIE BYRNE**'s 2017 LP. **'Summer Glass'** is but a taste of the singer-songwriter's much-awaited new album. Sonically, it's a more adventurous affair. There are synths where one would expect stark acoustic guitars, and they're by late creative partner Eric Littmann (whom the new music does a stunning job of honouring).

Deep explorations of one's mind via icy synths? Don't mind if we do. **MEGA BOG** (aka Erin Birgy) keeps taking resolutely diverse sonic directions that are getting more and more audacious, and her latest album is nothing short of fascinating. Standout **'Cactus People'** brims with a certain Kate Bush vibe, as well as retro synthetic sounds that are eerie and inviting in equal measure.

We love new songs, but we love new old songs too. Especially when they come from tapes covered in decades-long dust. This is what Eli 'Paperboy' Reed recently found in his dad's attic – recordings of the late **FRED DAVIS**, with whom dad had worked in a factory in the late '60s. **'Wine Hop'** is a classic that never was, recorded simply in a living room. Davis could play like the blues greats, but didn't get recognition in his lifetime. It's surely time to remedy that.

ROSE CITY BAND, the cosmic country project of Moon Duo's Ripley Johnson, hits the spot with the perfect lazin'-on-a-sunny-afternoon sound: album number four *Garden Party* stays true to its name and delivers a perfect summer soundtrack. Hard to resist the languorous stoned charm of **'Mariposa'**: there are caressing vocals, daydreaming flutes and the kind of conversational guitar playing that evokes the Dead at their most relaxed.

Picture, if you will, a library recording created just in time for the final days of psychploitation. **SOUND UNIT #6 'Side Effects Theme'** could easily pass for a rare vintage cut that crate-diggers would fight over. Actually, it's something graphic designer George Fotopoulos recorded on the occasion of the recent Side Effects II festival. Do seek it out if fuzz-heavy wild trips are your thing (we know they are).

There's a certain feel for welcome returns over this selection of Tracks. Our final find is a rare new recording from **LESLIE MEDFORD**. In the '80s, when a lot of San Francisco music was busy veering towards the corporate and bland, his group The Ophelias were still pleading the case for multi-coloured psychedelia. Almost 40 years later, **'Leslie's Dream'** finds him pursuing darker acid trips: there's political turmoil, "David Bowie knives", and a motorik pulse with hypnotic effects...

Hooray for Girl Ray!

Svensk wonders Us And Them

(already two years old even then) it isn't the best name for a group, especially in the forward-thinking year of 1967. That said, these are two decent enough tracks, played in a modish beat style, with some nice jazzy-ish R&B move, that never made it further than the acetate stage.

'Keep Left' wouldn't set the world alight, even if it had been afforded a release at the time. 'Getting Out' might be the beatier of the two options. It's faster paced with descriptive lyrics that tell of the multiple ways that could allow the island boys to escape from the place in which they seem to be trapped – luckily they did make it out and got as far as London to record this pairing. Guitarist Pete Frampton isn't the same mod face who would lead The Herd. Limited pressing on both black and white vinyl.

Lenny Helsing

THE STUDIO 68!
Back With The Boys EP
★★★★

DETOUR

Last seen circa 1992, The Studio 68! return with four sweat-drenched scorchers that show the intervening 30 years have withered them not a jot. The original four are all present and correct, but for all bar the EP's title track they are joined by Dani Turner on lead vocals.

Opener 'Feel Free' is a garage-soul mini-epic, an original but reminiscent of the frenzied treatment The Detroit Cobras would give old R&B numbers by The "5" Royales and Bobbie Smith & The Dreamgirls. The title track maintains the frenetic pace with just a touch of Madchester and bags of happy handclapping and heavy Hammond, and closer 'Rolling With the Punches' sees Maggie Bell teaming with Bad Company for some mid-70s boogie blues. 'Slow Boat To China', meanwhile, soundtracks those scenes in late '60s movies where the impeccably square hero stumbles into London's super-groovy clubland. Welcome back, boys.

Peter Gallagher

THE THANES
Les Thanes EP
★★★★

DISQUES ROGUE

No strangers to the lost and very specific art of the classic seven-inch EP, The Thanes return with the latest addition to their ever-expanding discography. Titled *Les Thanes* in a bow to Toulouse-based label Rogue Records, the unstoppable Lenny Helsing and friends are back with the winning combination of two new originals and two well-chosen and period perfect covers.

Overflowing with energy, The Thanes' time-warped garage sonics explode into life on the opening 'For What Reward?'. As openers go it's mightily impressive and such is its momentum, before you know it you've already reached the concluding selection 'Heed The Warning'. In between we're treated to a shot of re-activated Aussie garage in the shape of The Twilights' 'It's Dark', while the undoubted *piece de resistance* is an expert retread of The Pretty Things' 'You'll Never Do It Baby'.

Grahame Bent

US AND THEM
We Count The Evening Stars EP
★★★★★

WITHDRAWN

Swedish duo Us And Them's two-decade career has seamlessly balanced originals with unique interpretations of personal favourites (Sandy Denny, Richard Thompson, Roy Harper).

Again mixing obscure with familiar artists, the set begins with Nick Garrie's 'Can I Stay With You' (from 1968 cult classic *The Nightmare Of JB Stanislas*) that downplays the original's unrequested orchestration. It's thus closer to Garrie's intentions while retaining the melancholic strains of Nirvana's 'Tiny Goddess'. Few songs epitomize psychedelic pop more than The Zombies' 'Beechwood Park' and the reverential treatment here doesn't mess with perfection. Thin Lizzy's gentler side is explored in 'Little Girl In Bloom', eschewing guitar pyrotechnics to focus on the heartrending lyrics. Lastly, the gossamer delicacy of Trees' 'The Garden Of Jane Delawney' is successfully replicated with double-tracked vocals and minimalist backing that recaptures the oppressive, heart-breaking atmosphere.

Jeff Penczak

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Mike D Brazil 45s
★★★★★

MR BONGO 5-45 BOX SET

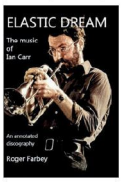
The fourth in the series of *Brazil 45s* boxes stunningly reflects its curator Mike D of The Beastie Boys' taste for all things atypical, off the wall and experimental.

It kicks off with a rare promo-only seven-inch recorded for Toyota by Inês Soares and then takes the listener on a journey of discovery through an ever-changing landscape of deep cuts and rarities from the '70s. Save for the opening Inês Soares/Nicholas Mariano split, both sides of the remaining 45s are reserved for a taster of wildly inventive sounds from Pedro Santos & Sebastião Tapajós, Hareton Salvanini, Módulo 1000 and Erasmo Carlos. While the accent is firmly on the revelatory across the contents of the box, it's the fabulously maverick creations from Hareton Salvanini's incredible 1971 EP *Hareton + Meta* EP that take the proverbial biscuit here.

Grahame Bent

ELASTIC DREAM: THE MUSIC OF IAN CARR
Roger Farbey
★★★★

JAZZ IN BRITAIN



Roger Farbey is uniquely well qualified to compile a discography of Ian Carr, having previously contributed numerous reviews, articles and sleeve notes for a number of outlets on his specialist subject: virtuoso trumpeter, flugelhorn player, composer, bandleader, journalist, broadcaster and acclaimed author Ian Carr.

Fully revised and updated from previous editions, *Elastic Dream* is the ultimate listener's guide to Carr's extensive recording career. While Alyn Shipton's *Out Of The Long Dark: The Life Of Ian Carr* is recognised as the definitive biography of the musician, Farbey has concentrated his focus on Carr's sizeable and diverse discography while also cataloguing his journalistic and broadcasting work with *Melody Maker* and the BBC.

Initially coming to the fore as an integral part of the much-loved Rendell-Carr Quintet which set the standards for British jazz during the mid to late '60s, Carr subsequently branched out, leading the ground-breaking fusion outfit Nucleus throughout their multi-decade career while also appearing on recordings by prominent fellow British jazzmen including Michael Garrick, Stan Tracey, Neil Ardley, Keith Tippett and Mike Gibbs in addition to his work with The United Jazz + Rock Ensemble. Sub-divided into contemporary and archival releases, *Elastic Dream* should be considered the last word in discographies of one of the most important musicians in the history of British jazz. To complement the text the book comes with a nine-track CD that documents a selection of predominantly live performances spanning Carr's storied career.

Grahame Bent

FREE YOUR MIND
Simon Matthews
★★★★

OLD CASTLE

Tinto Brass is the larger-than-life Italian director remembered mainly for his erotic, borderline pornographic films, particularly the car crash, star-strewn *Caligula*. What is less well-known is that Brass started his filmic career as a doyen of the counterculture *a la* Godard and Antonioni, spending his formative years honing his talent in the heart of Swinging London. It's this unfamiliar story that Simon Matthews, author of the alternative history of UK film and TV music *Psychedelic Celluloid*, tells in *Free Your Mind*.

Beginning with a detailed history of Brass himself, the book moves onto his arrival in London and his ambition to rival the likes of Peter Whitehead as documenter of the underground. Focusing on Brass's four London films and the surrounding subculture, *Free Your Mind* reflects on his attempts to convey

the rising significance of sexual freedom, political radicalism and racial tensions – nowhere more so than in his underground classic *Nerosubianco*. To support this narrative the film-maker made it his business to capture pivotal counter-culture moments on film; moments including The 14 Hour Technicolor Dream happening at Ally Pally that features in *Col Cuare In Gola*.

Matthews doesn't hold back when it comes to detail, and this makes for a fascinating read as we uncover a whole new perspective on the well-worn history of underground London. And it's a credit to him that he so deftly reveals the ethical and moral foundations of Brass's early work – those that have largely been overlooked as the director descended into the derided world of smut and sleaze.

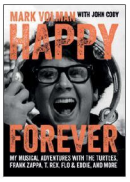
Sarah Gregory

HAPPY FOREVER

Mark Volman with John Cody

★★★

JAWBONE



There are two names on the front cover, the biggest of which is Mark Volman's, and this tome is subtitled *My Musical Adventures With The Turtles, Frank Zappa, T Rex, Flo & Eddie And More*. Based on that evidence alone one might reasonably expect this to be Mr Volman's autobiography, but one would be wrong. It is instead a series of interviews *about* Volman, conducted, edited and written up by the cover's smaller name, John Cody, with the occasional comment from Volman thrown in.

Ironically, the second half of the book, when the titular "musical adventures" are long over, is the better half, because the interviewees remember to keep Volman front-and-centre. It is also a genuinely interesting "after the fame has gone" story covering Volman's return to college, his move to Nashville, and his conversion to Christianity, as well as some surprising perspectives on his long-term friendship/partnership with Howard Kaylan.

When it comes to the first half's musical adventures, the interviewees really can't stop talking about themselves. With the exception of Jim Tucker, who always seems up for a fight (example: "Mark was a bumbling idiot. He had no talent, and neither did Howard"), all the ex-Turtles talk about *their* time in the band, with various Mothers Of Invention then following suit. Meanwhile, all comments by Three Dog Night's Danny Hutton are so off-target they could be deleted without changing the narrative one iota.

Happy Together is interesting enough, but I'd rather have read the autobiography promised on the cover.

Peter Gallagher

LISTEN TO THE
SHINDIG!
BROADCAST
ON MIXCLOUD

IT'S THE TRUTH: MAKING THE ONLY ONES

Simon Wright

★★★★★

SHAKESPEARE EDITORIAL

Surprisingly, this is the first book written specifically about the eponymous debut album by London's punk-era alternatives The Only Ones, the album's gestation and general history lesson that goes with it. Inhabited by dark-heart romance, drugs and nihilism, and elevated by John Perry's exceptional lead guitar work, the songs that make up *The Only Ones* still have the ability to charm, caution and delight listeners irrespective of age or tribe.

All group members have a story to tell regarding earlier rock 'n' roll dues-paying – amongst the more public being bassist Alan Mair's days playing in Scots '60s phenomenon The Beatstalkers and his subsequent boots and clothes making for the stars; drummer Mike Kellie with The VIP's, who morphed into psychsters Art (their *Supernatural Fairytales* LP produced for Island by maverick loon Guy Stevens), before becoming internationally renowned progressives Spooky Tooth. Guitarist/vocalist and songwriter Peter Perrett, meanwhile, was behind early '70s underground act England's Glory.

Wright does a fine job of pulling all the strands together to allow everyone their say on the various situations that helped spawn the group and its repertoire. This lends the proceedings a truly authentic air and grips the reader from start to finish. One only wishes for the story to continue with recollections around the making of subsequent albums *Even Serpents Shine* and *Baby's Got A Gun*. Oh, and the group's final, fateful US tour; maybe for another time, or another planet.

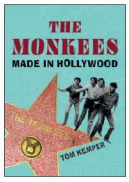
Lenny Helsing

THE MONKEES: MADE IN HOLLYWOOD

Tom Kemper

★★★★

REAKTION



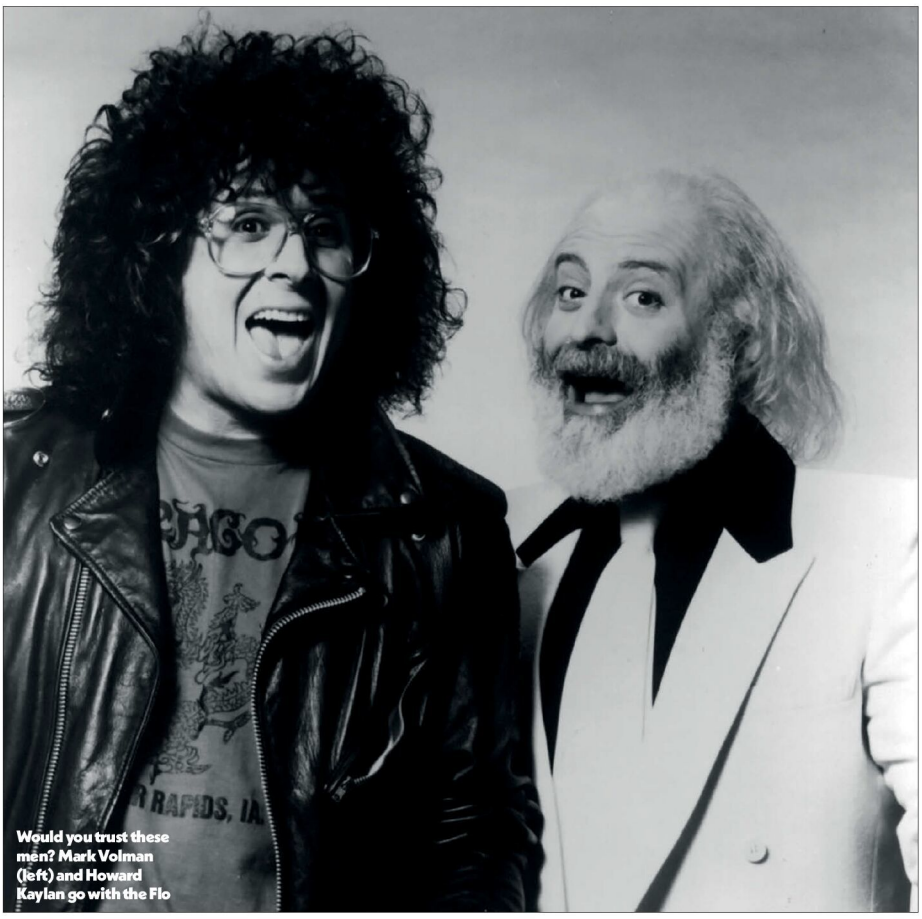
History has redeemed The Monkees but for a long time they were derided by critics because of their lack of authenticity: the Pre-Fab Four, manufactured by commercial industry rather than a band who had paid their dues performing in bars and clubs before breaking through.

Academic Tom Kemper puts another spin on that interpretation in this fascinating and witty account. There was nothing organic about The Monkees' roots. They were a made-for-television band created to capitalise on the commercial success of The Beatles. But rather than deride that fact Kemper celebrates it as testimony to the "genius" of the music industry: the winning combination of producers, songwriters, session musicians, promoters and distributors.

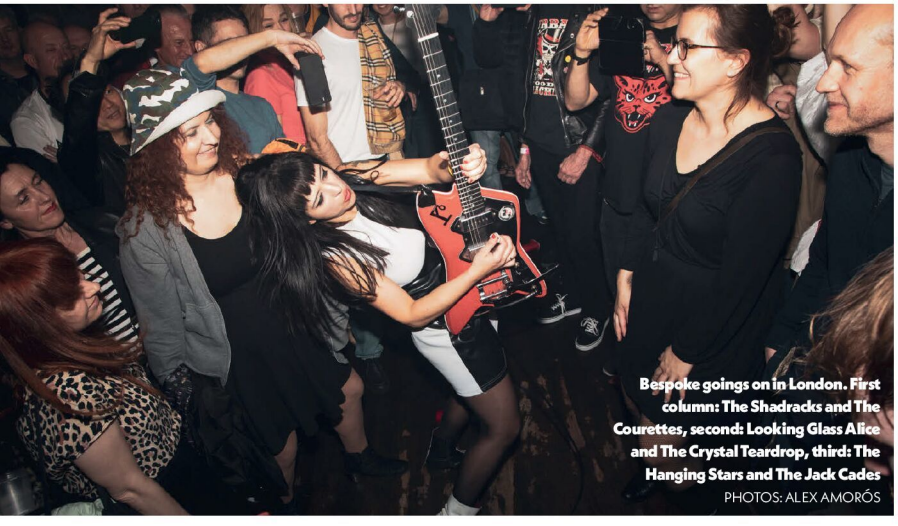
The book is full of interesting insights, such as the observation that the original recruitment advertisement asked for "spirited Ben Frank's-types", privileged the young white wannabes who frequented the Sunset Boulevard coffee shop to the exclusion of racial minorities.

Kemper is impressive in unpacking particular songs, although his selection is rather arbitrary ('Gonna Buy Me A Dog' is in but not 'Listen To The Band'). He also abruptly ends his narrative with the release of the film and album *Head*. That means there's no mention of the band's next deconstruction of their prefabricated identity, *33 1/3 Revolutions Per Monkee*, nor the fate of albums released after the cancellation of the television series including later reunions. A few minor factual errors further affect what is otherwise a fresh and engaging take on an oft-told story.

Clive Webb



Would you trust these men? Mark Volman (left) and Howard Kaylan go with the Flo



Bespoke goings on in London. First column: The Shadracks and The Courettes, second: Looking Glass Alice and The Crystal Teardrop, third: The Hanging Stars and The Jack Cades
PHOTOS: ALEX AMORÓS

LE BEAT BESPOKE

Oslo/Paper Dress Vintage/ Strongroom, London

FRIDAY 7TH APRIL-SUNDAY 9TH APRIL

FRIDAY

We've come to expect everything and anything but low-key from the Le Beat Bespoke Easter weekender, and this year, particularly, we hit the ground running.

Garage-punk trio **The Shadracks** are geared up to thrust us face first into Friday's sticky emancipation, soundtracking a descent into utter bedlam. Sparks fly as fizzy surf rubs against frontman Huddie Shadrack's gritty vocals in a sound entirely of its own but reassuringly familiar. There's a steely disposition and bolshy beat and both the band and the audience are itching for more. But it's time for **The Courettes**, who are in London for one night only before continuing their relentless, three-year, world-dominating tour. The husband/wife pair are jetlagged but "still feeling dynamite", armed with floor filling tracks such as 'Want You! Like A Cigarette' and 'Daydream' (sung entirely in Japanese) that swirl between Angels-esqe kitschy blues and unpolished riot grrrl rock. As psychedelic eddies swell around the crowd's fizzing energy and Martin Couri's Spitfire drumming, Flavia takes aim with the headstock of her guitar, letting off a fuzzy and roaring riff that hits so hot you have no choice but to move your feet. We're only just now starting to catch back our breath.

Millen Brown-Ewens

SATURDAY DAYTIME

On a gloriously sunny spring afternoon, the great and good of UK and Europe's psych scene gather in Shoreditch for the annual Le Beat Bespoke Saturday session and it makes such a refreshing change to see female fronted bands taking centre stage – more please!

The Crystal Teardrop bring the Paisley Underground edge and smash it into some pretty heavy '67 psych. This hasty, and lazy, comparison is proved to be right as the band rip through a set that is bloody good fun. Singer Alexandra Rose throws her blonde Bardot 'do as recklessly as she does her Rickenbacker, bassist Caitlin Hare and drummer Connor Wells hold down a mesmeric backing. Leon Adrian on lead and Stuart Gray on keys add some heavy weirdness into the mix. Particular highlights are 'Promises, Promises' a cover of Dana Gillespie's 'You Just Gotta Know My Mind' and the heady, hazy closer 'Down By The River'.

Looking Glass Alice are taking the tips of psychedelia and ramping them up to 11. Singer Sarah McQueen has a touch of Sarah Cracknell in her vocals and her deadpan delivery is contrasted by her husband Alfie wrestling the wildest sounds from his guitar. A whole host of electronic sounds augment the groovy bass being laid down by Joey Whitney-Fish and sharp drums from Archie Cornell. Debut single 'I Know', the Japanese version of latest single 'Spiders' and a full-on cover of Bruno Leys' 'Dans La Galaxie' stood out but the song that best sums up Looking Glass Alice is 'Kingfisher', caught in a fleeting glimpse, a flash of brilliance passing by, a moment of clarity and beauty before disappearing, elusive, difficult to capture but definitely something to wonder at.

Ben Adlam

SATURDAY EVENING

Sharply dressed in kaftans and symbolic necklaces, Spanish band **Mohama Saz** open tonight's bill with a mesmerically rendered, sharp set. It's an esoteric ride across a wild terrain of psychedelic raga-infused tunes, setting us up nicely for Nick Saloman and **The Bevis Frond**.

On a return to his natural East London roots, from where he sprouted to become a fecund musician and producer, Nick Saloman digs deep into the fabric of the Frond's bulging back catalogue for this home crowd. "We've been wanting to play Le Beat Bespoke for some time and we're going to do some appropriate covers," he declares before the band rip through raucous covers of 'Father's Name Is Dad' by Fire and 'Magic Potion' by The Open Mind. Taking things up a notch, this crack team of players further delight tonight's appreciative throng with original slabs that include 'Flood Warning', 'Everyone Rise', 'He'd Be A Diamond' and 'Lights Are Changing'. A sitar is strapped on. Anecdotes about Terry Wogan are told. Another judicious cover, '(I'm Not Your) Steppin' Stone', gets stripped back to The Flies deconstructed version and concludes tonight's well-tailored bill of exceptional heady sound waves.

Paul Davies

SUNDAY

The last night of any festival tends to end in one of two ways: a sedate wind down, or a culminating crescendo. The bands on display tonight definitely propelled this finale headlong towards the latter. The (hungover) crowd upped their collective game from the off to reflect the energy emanating from the stage.

The Jack Cades' energetic R&B-fuelled freakbeat is powerfully driven by the drumming of scene Zelig Mole Lambert,

"The husband/wife pair are jetlagged but "still feeling dynamite", armed with floor filling tracks that swirl between Angels-esqe kitschy blues and unpolished riot grrrl rock"

and their high-octane mix of male and female vocals. Fleetingly appropriately named, new single 'Something New' is a particular highlight amongst many, as is the beatiest and twangiest ever cover of The Velvet Underground's 'Temptation Inside your Heart'.

These balls of energy are followed by **The Hanging Stars**, positioned behind a huge array of guitar pedals, including their legendary pedal steel. We are flung triumphantly into the heady world of Americana, albeit a cosmic rather than rustic world with paisley rather than Stetsons the order of the day. Charismatic front man Richard Olson tosses surprises out to the crowd like bones: the presence of new bassist Paul Milne (Green Seagull) and the debut of a brand-new song called (for now) 'Sweet Night For Now'. There's a wave of appreciation as 'I Don't Want To Feel So Bad Any More' is introduced as an anti-Tory song, the lyrics bringing the ambience away from the West Coast back to our own front doors. And then this glorious festival comes to a close. Easter everywhere – rejoice!

Martin Farrow

THE STEVE HILLAGE BAND

Concorde 2, Brighton

SUNDAY 2ND APRIL

Word has it that these could be the last Steve Hillage Band shows featuring the guitarist's classic '70s material. If that's so, then on the strength of this final night of the accurately named Golden Vibe tour, they're definitely going out on a high.

After a short video intro (pleasingly featuring a brief clip of Hillage's #1 fictional fan, Neil from *The Young Ones*) and an instrumental overture ('Fish'), the band are straight into The Beatles' 'It's All Too Much', the dense, churning wash of guitars and drums studded with dextrous, brassy synth stabs from Hillage's long-term partner Miquette Giraudy. Besides Hillage and Giraudy, the remaining five musicians on stage comprise the current line-up of Hillage's old *alma mater* Gong, with the flamboyant Kavus Torabi acting as both band leader and Hillage's primary guitar foil (he also played earlier as part of support act The Utopia Strong).

The ensemble playing is tight and impressive, but the unassuming Hillage's bright guitar tone and hypnotic, rhythmic riff patterns soon come into sharp focus, whether on the tumbling grooves of 'The Salmon Song' or the prog-funk of 'Ether Ships'. Trippy space voyages are perfectly balanced against tougher, more melodic songs, including a cobweb-blasting assault on Kevin Ayers' 'Why Are We Sleeping' and a sky-scraping 'Hurdy Gurdy Man'. The encore includes further psychedelic classics, from a fine retooling of The Move's 'I Can Hear The Grass Grow' to Gong's 'Glorious Om Riff' and finally, Hendrix's 'Are You Experienced'. After tonight, we certainly are.

Ben Graham

HIS LORDSHIP/BRUNO & THE OUTREAGEOUS METHODS OF PRESENTATION/ US/HOT STAMP

The Lafayette, London

THURSDAY 13TH APRIL

If there were ever any doubt that the kids are all right, tonight's youthful bill seems tailor-made to put old rockers' minds at ease.

Although their combined age is less than a single Rolling Stone, teenage rock-stars-in-waiting **Hot Stamp** already have the seasoned, cocksure attitude that usually has to be earned from years of sweaty touring. Tonight, singer Jasmine is equal parts snarl and sass, while sister Poppy's guitar lines blaze brightly, backed by a bushy-tailed, boy-section. There are whispers of Bobby Gillespie-helmed recordings and exciting times surely lie ahead.

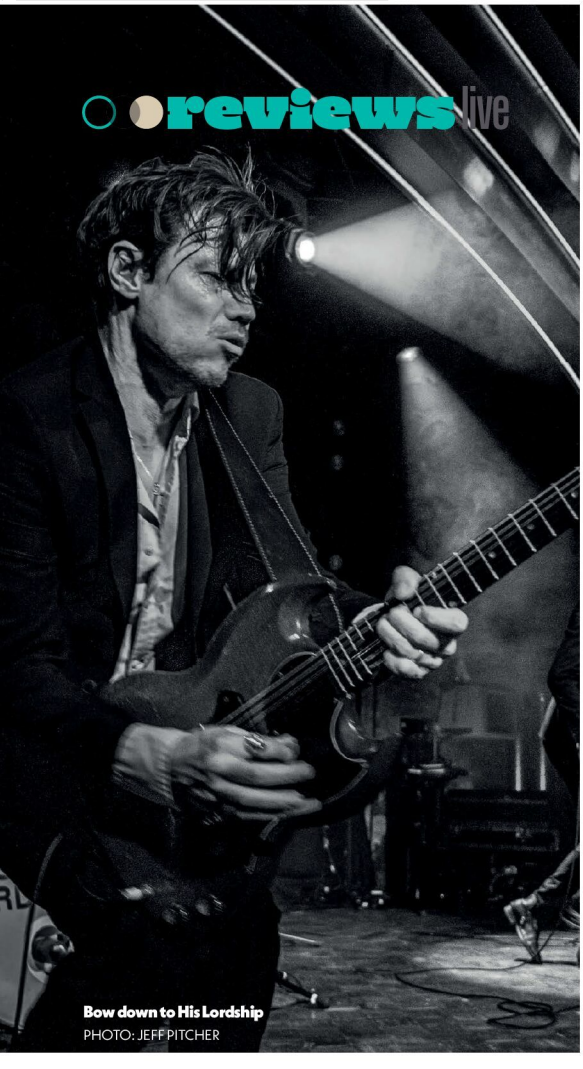
Finnish upstarts **Us** are equally fresh-faced, and their sharp, bouncing feelgood set of (and Feelgood) powerpop hits the ground running and doesn't let up for a moment. After highlights that include 'Black Sheep' and 'Hold On', the band climax with a gob-smackingly speedy cover of Gene Vincent's 'Say Mama'.

Another Class-of-2023 contender, teenage **Bruno** and his (slightly more seasoned) Methods peer through their situationist specs at the world of garage-punk. Bruno is a ragged, heart-on-sleeve optimist, willing to roll in stage dirt for his beloved rock 'n' roll. Much to the amusement and eye rolling of bass player Delia.

Years ago, there was a kid, maybe not even a teenager, who used to hop on the stage at legendary afternoon country session, Come Down And Meet The Folks. His phenomenal bluesy guitar playing outshone most of the adults on the bill. Turns out that that kid grew up to be James Walbourne, lead singer and even more phenomenal guitar player in **His Lordship**. Joined by the super-showbiz trap man Kris Sonne and bass player Dave Page, His Lordship somehow manage to fuse greasy rockabilly, wide-eyed Star Club R&B, pub-rock and punk-rock, and drizzle it with a showbiz wink and smile. They're a phenomenon; both Kris and James compete for attention; amps are jumped from, loud hailers sung through, songs paused to gawp at an imaginary wristwatch. The tight, yet head-shakingly clever tunes fly by, whip smart; 'All Cranked Up' and 'I Live In The City', while 'Jackie Works For The NHS' is an oven-ready classic. There are a handful of well-chosen covers; a jaw-dropping version of Jeff Beck's 'Sleep Walk' has the place in tears, while the finale of 'Red Hot' is, indeed, fierce and fiery. You need to see them, that is all there is to it.

Kate Hodges

LISTEN TO SHINDIG! ON SOHO RADIO
Soho Radio



Bow down to His Lordship
PHOTO: JEFF PITCHER

Sylvie
PHOTO: TESS CARGES

Kevin Eldon joins the tribute to Vivian Stanshall
PHOTO: CARL GLOVER

VIVIAN STANSHALL'S 80TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

Union Chapel, London

23RD MARCH

There's much love tonight in Union Chapel for the late Vivian Stanshall, on what would have been his 80th Birthday. Vivian's spirit is present in the packed pews of London's most happening church to celebrate his life and the forthcoming posthumous albums *Dog Howl In Tune* and *Rawlinson's End*.

A driving version of 'We Are Normal' reveals backing band The Rhinocratic Oafs headed by Michael Livesley (vocals) and Andy Frizell (bass/vocals). The band, directed in their endeavours by Bill Leach, features Viv collaborator and violinist Susie Honeyman and Brian Gulland of Gryphon on contra bassoon looking like he's having the time of his life. Bonzos classics include 'Tent', 'Death Cab For Cutie', 'My Pink Half Of The Drainpipe' and 'Hunting Tigers', while original Bonzo Rodney Slater appears for a skwawk through 'Mr Slater's Parrot' and a very touching solo ukulele rendition of Viv's 'The Cracks Are Showing'. Another Bonzo, 'Legs' Larry Smith as Mr Wonderful, had the place in hysterics, Andy Frizell's take on Neil Innes' 'Quiet Talks' brings both a tear to the eye and loud applause followed by a positively Pink Floydian rendition of 'What Do You Do?' Livesley gives the audience a section of his astounding one-man Sir Henry show whilst the actor Kevin Eldon's interpretation of 'Canyons Of Your Mind' and 'Look Out There's A Monster Coming' are at once surreal and psychotic. By the time Viv's son Rupert leads the audience through a rendition of 'Happy Birthday' and the last strains of 'Ginger Geezer' drifted up into the vaulted ceiling, everyone there knows it's been a very special night.

Richard Allen

SYLVIE

The Lodge Room, Los Angeles

FRIDAY 14TH APRIL

While the pop stars are away at Coachella this weekend, the dream of the '70s is alive and well in LA. Sylvie is set to take the stage and a crowd of nostalgists are ready. The relatively new band, led by Ben Schwab, has garnered a loyal following of bellbottomed daydreamers.

The LA crowd isn't certain who will be joining Ben on stage; luckily, we get a septet. William Worden takes lead guitar in stride, Laura Jean Anderson is on lead vocals for about half of the songs, and Zena Kay brings the house down on pedal steel. Ben Schwab is the maestro, alternating, like much of the band, between different instruments throughout the set. After each song, the band seems to rotate to a new position, highlighting the talents and ambitions of the group.

Sylvie plays the best stuff from their album, including 'Further Down The Road' and 'Rosaline'. In a particularly sweet moment, Schwab asks the crowd if we've heard of his father's band, Mad Anthony, to which some of us cheer. After a surprised smile breaks across his face, Schwab begins of cover of his dad's 'Rina', a sweet ditty made sweeter by a son's appreciation.

The set concludes with 'Falls On Me', which Schwab introduces as "one of the better songs I've written in my life". He's right, it's a fantastic tune and it sounds right at home with Laura Jean Anderson. The septet quickly pop back for a rousing encore. They debut a new song and cover Laura Nyro's 'Stoned Soul Picnic'. The band's foray into soul is promising, proving they not only have reverence for the dulcet, but for the rambunctious too. The set ends all too soon, but there's great pleasure to be found in anxiously awaiting Sylvie's next album.

Tess Carges

SPENCER CULLUM'S COIN COLLECTION

The Lexington, London

WEDNESDAY 3RD MAY

Spencer Cullum and his band, which share the same personnel as support act Rich Ruth's, amble on the stage with the addition of trumpet player Nick Etwell. It's a model that works well for musicians from overseas: two bands for the airfare of one. Ruth, who was signed by Third Man last year, records deep, ambient, experimental music that in a live setting takes on space-jazz hues – and is incredible.

After 15 minutes the band returns with flautist Jenni Hogan and singer Dana Gavanski, with Spencer sitting down with an acoustic guitar in front of a mic. Opening with a fine version of UK progressive folkies Trees' 'Road', the tone is set for the next hour of melancholic and pastoral Canterbury-esque progressive sounds: folky, jazzy, and highly agreeable. Playing material from *Coin Collection* and *Coin Collection 2*, with Gavanski handling all of the female parts and Spencer's estuary-accented voice recalling Robert Wyatt's, it's a beautiful sound that's as timeless as his knitwear and dungarees combo. Sean Thompson also performs two songs from his *Weird Ears* album and a cover of Jerry Garcia's 'After Midnight' in the middle of the set, allowing Spencer to coax some sweet sounds from his pedal steel for a couple of numbers. Thompson and Ruth complement each other's guitar parts throughout with Ruth doubling up on synth.

The excellent rhythm section of Harry Bohay and Mikey Sobello lock together on the Neu-like 'Dietrich Buxtchude' and do exactly what is required throughout. This is a faultless evening with the relaxed feel and musical smarts of early '70s ensemble The Whole World and the chilled, get-it-together vibe of Laurel Canyon. A mesmerising show that wooed the capacity audience.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

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OXFORD O2 ACADEMY2*
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FRI 08 / BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY
SAT 09 / LONDON O2 FORUM KENTISH TOWN

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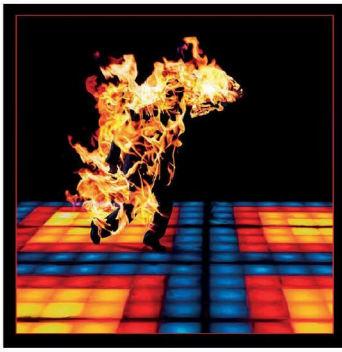

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05 BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY
06 BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY2
07 SHEFFIELD O2 ACADEMY2
08 LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY2
09 LONDON O2 ACADEMY ISLINGTON

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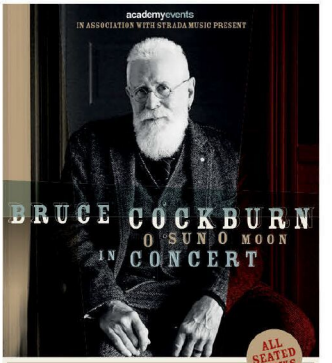

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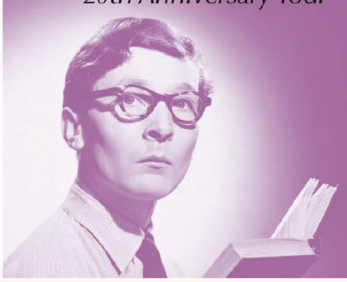

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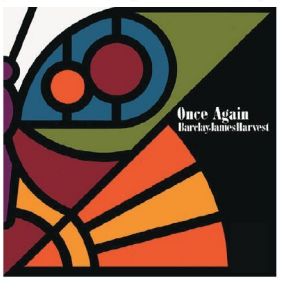
Prize Crossword

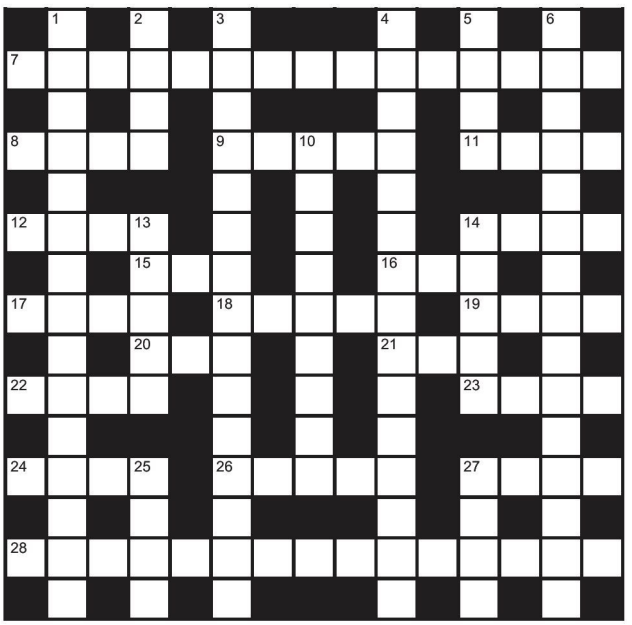
by Stuart Draper

An acknowledged classic in the symphonic prog canon, **BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST**'s 1971 sophomore outing ***ONCE AGAIN*** remains a favourite among fans of the band and devotees of the era. Recorded at Abbey Road Studios with producer Norman Smith and engineer Alan Parsons, there are at least two classics here in 'Galadriel' and 'Mocking Bird'. Esoteric's new vinyl edition, housed in a replica gatefold sleeve, sounds every bit as warm as you'd hope.

And we have a copy to give away.

To enter, simply send your completed crossword to *Shindig!* #140 Crossword, 40 Windsor Crescent, Frome, Somerset BA11 2EA or email a legible scan of it to win@shindig-magazine.com with the words "S! #140 crossword competition" in the subject line, no later than 6th July. And don't forget to include your name and address!





Across

7 Alter bang for a Spanish garage band (6,9)
8 Summers start with Dantalian's Chariot and a Van Dyke Parks part (4)
9 Latin king surrounds Los Angeles, provides a Holy Wave (5)
11 Amphibious Swiss band to advise in half (4)
12 See 5 Down
14 Not this magazine... and surely it should be Jon 'Shindig' Mills? (4)
15 Camel's under, an advantage in the end (3)
16 In time is empty for Aesop's Fables, requires most of a duet (3)
17 Carry out information technology, a first reverse for The Pink Fairies, (2,2)
18 Reduced glances prick the only release from Asland Records (5)
19 Phew! Sally taunts once shaved, although it's relative (4)
20 This slight grimace follows drummer, and stops the dirty supergroup (3)
21 You better complement The Young Rascals and prune without the edges (3)
22 Aniseed extract precedes the rain with The Marmalade (1,3)
23 Kevin Parker leads rooibok with this Old Testament quote (4)
24 Deflated without deed, apartment heads Roy Harper's first charting album (4)
26 A vertical line or a fruity sound from Field Music (5)
27 Strong words from the 1968 Playboy house band (4)
28 No nail in our jail – that's out of order – all blue debut with a Sill cover (8,7)

Down

1 Johnson, a slim bum potentially, and what you could get from the producer of Cheap Thrills (4,6,5)
2 Mark Wirtz begins and British newspaper links with rugby score (1,3)
3 A titled Thomas Cook would flip for Brian Connell (2,6,7)
4 Pals of Quasimodo, this New Jersey band fuses the ancient king of Macedonia with some talk (9,6)
5/12 Manassas put it about in the middle, a mangled mintiest (4,4)
6 Mike, Andy, Wil (5,4,6)
10 I can't go on with Fortes Mentum, can't stop with The Last Word (6,3)
13 Meat means Howard Walker can trim the edges for this invitation (3,2)
14 Friends of The Beach Boys have an average teaspoon to begin (5)
25 Sympathise a bit, what is pop for XTC? (4)
27 The Beatles' bungalow receives invoice (4)

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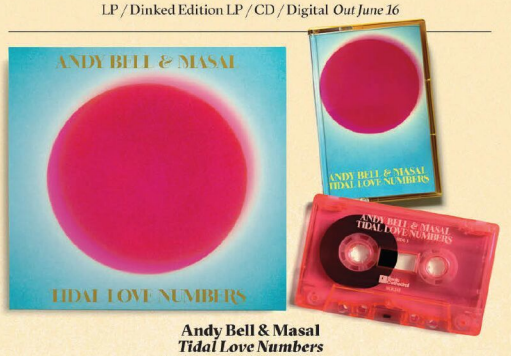

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Issue 139 crossword solution

1 M	Y	2 C	R	3 Y	S	4 T	A	5 L	S	6 P	I	7 D	E	8 R
E	■	U	■	O	■	H	■	E	■	E	■	O	■	U
9 C	A	P	T	U	R	E	■	10 S	U	N	B	E	A	M
H	■	■	■	C	■	11 A	N	T	■	C	■	■	■	P
12 A	O	13 R	T	A	■	C	■	E	■	14 I	D	15 E	A	L
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18 C	H	R	I	S	T	O	P	H	E	R	C	O	L	T
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O	■	■	■	M	■	25 L	O	I	■	V	■	■	■	S
26 R	U	27 S	S	E	L	L	■	28 T	H	E	P	29 A	C	K
L	■	H	■	A	■	E	■	M	■	M	■	I	■	I
30 D	E	E	A	N	D	T	H	E	Y	E	O	M	E	N

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by Dream Phases - NER-048

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The earthy-yet-exalted sounds of the Byrds, the Beach Boys and Crosby, Stills, Nash ,Young – as well as latter-dayartists like the Rain Parade, Elliott Smith and Autolux – figure into the band's family tree. Whilethis lineage is worth noting, what comes through in the band's latest work is an individual approach that translates the experiences of its members into something undeniably compelling.

First track to last, you can hear this vitality in New Distractions, Dream Phases' sophomore album.

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EXCLUSIVE RELEASES

Hold Drugs Dear

By R.J. Bloke - NER-049

Hold Drugs Dear is a dynamic solo effort from RJ Bloke, front man & songwriter for Los Angeles based alt-country, americana, roots rock quartet Patrolled By Radar.

These warm and urgent analog recordings feature an array of stellar guests including Alex Moore, Spencer Livingston (Livingmore), Eli Wulfmeier (Leroy from the North), Peter Curry (Los Straitjackets, Nick Lowe), and Davey Allen (Eric Burdon, Davey & The Midnights).

This collection of well-crafted poetic and melodic songs are sure to appeal to fans of Dylan, Ray Davies, Jeff Tweedy, Lennon & Paul McCartney and many more, truly magificent.

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The Birdmen Of Alkatraz

From The Bird Cage

CONTEMPO, ITALY, 1989

COVER PAINTING: RICK GRIFFIN

PHIL SUGGITT marvels at a little-known late period psychedelic album sleeve by '60s San Francisco poster legend Rick Griffin

The Birdmen Of Alkatraz were an Italian band from Pisa with a sound strongly influenced by '60s West Coast psychedelia. Their first full album was recorded in the summer of 1988, a time when their music was neither fashionable nor commercial. The band must have been over the moon to find that Rick Griffin had accepted the commission to paint the cover of their record, *From The Bird Cage*. Why? Because Griffin perfectly represented their musical influences. Rick Griffin is generally accepted as one of the finest (if not *the* finest) of the '60s West Coast underground counterculture poster artists, utilising outstanding graphic skills to create genuinely psychedelic images.

He is equally well regarded for his lettering and submitted several drafts for the cover title of *Rolling Stone*, expecting the editors to select one for him to work up, but was surprised to see the first issue of the magazine had used one of his drafts! The magazine's co-founder Jann Wenner later wrote that Griffin embodied the counterculture more than any other artist. His iconic and instantly recognisable designs will be forever linked with his concert posters for the likes of Jimi Hendrix, The Grateful Dead, Country Joe, and The Doors, to name but a few. Anyone even remotely interested in the music and culture that emerged from Haight Ashbury will be familiar with some of his work. Griffin's LP sleeve art is equally inspired and original, so it is perhaps surprising that his work has not featured more prominently in the *Vinyl Art* series.

Two factors help to explain Rick's relative absence from this column. Some of his designs, such as those for Grateful Dead's *Aoxomoxoa* and the first Quicksilver Messenger Service album, are so well-known and highly regarded that they feature in every book of collected album art. This page focuses on less-heralded works. The other factor is that Griffin was not a prolific album illustrator. Griffin's official website features only 20 of his covers (no Birdmen cover) – mostly iconic and instantly recognisable paintings or lettering for the likes of Neil Young and the Dead. Aside from his poster work, Griffin produced a wealth of art for *Surfer* magazine and numerous underground comics such as *Zap!*.

"Griffin was exposed to the imagery of The Old West and the artwork and artefacts of Native American peoples"

Later works were influenced by his Born-Again Christian beliefs, but he did relatively few LP covers before his untimely death as the result of a motorcycle accident in '91 at the age of 37.

In December '87 a fire destroyed the Griffin family apartment in Santa Ana and the following year Griffin moved to the Bay Area while his wife and children settled in Santa Cruz. Perhaps funds were needed for the new family arrangements. Most of the images in Griffin's poster and cover work have little or no literal connection with the artist or album title in question, but in this case the artist presents a realistic version of the famous prison island and the San Francisco shoreline, which were literally on his doorstep.

Griffin is famous for his unique and outstanding lettering styles, which have been much imitated by lesser talents. He produced "extravaganzas of multiple perspectives and deep space *trompe l'oeil*". Initially his typography appears to break all the rules of commercial advertising, in that the words are difficult to read, but closer study and comprehension makes the viewer "buy in" to the image, as if they have been let into a secret. The Birdmen lettering is striking but reasonably legible compared to Griffin's most complex typography.

Doug Harvey, writing in The Laguna Art Museum's *Heart And Torch: Rick Griffin's Transcendence*, suggests that the most original and inspired aspect of the artist's work is his use of a profoundly personal archetypal language, including eggs, eyeballs, hearts, wings, natural phenomena like water, flames and lightning, sperm and ova. As a boy Rick accompanied his father James, a keen amateur archaeologist, on digs along the California coast. He was exposed to the imagery of The Old West and the artwork and artefacts of Native American peoples, which he incorporated into much of his work. In the Birdmen painting giant Birdman totems tower over the island of Alcatraz in striking fashion, rendered in a style influenced by the Hopi tribe and the totem poles of the Northwest coastal tribes.

Unlike most of Griffin's other commissions, the album was not a commercial success; it did not receive wide distribution outside of Italy, and disappeared into obscurity, never having been repressed or issued on CD. Reissue labels, take note! The Birdmen disbanded soon after, but *From The Bird Cage* remains well worth investigating. SI

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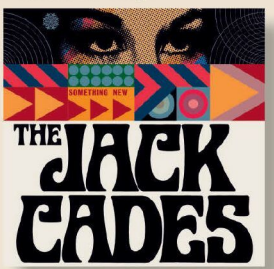

The Jack Cades
Something New
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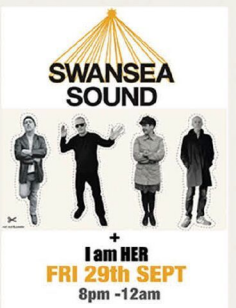

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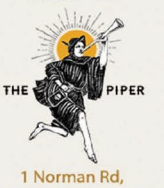

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In which **MICHAEL BJÖRN** investigates worthy albums that have somehow eluded reissue, compilation or acclaim

COLIN LLOYD TUCKER

Toy Box

(Plastic Head, UK, 1984)

In the late '70s, Colin Lloyd Tucker was recording an acid-punk album not unlike something by Robyn Hitchcock or Julian Cope, with the *Alice In Wonderland* whimsy of 1967 twisted into something darker. Unfortunately, *Toy Box* was shelved and when it appeared in '84, the neo-psychedelic floodgates had already opened.

After having been expelled from school aged 15, Colin became a tea boy at the De Wolfe Music recording studio. "When I wasn't making the tea, I was hanging out in the transfer bay with the quarter-inch Ampex machines, learning to edit and make loops," he says. "A lot of what ended up on *Toy Box* was actually done in that copying room." By '80 he was a recording engineer. "I wasn't really making an album," he explains. "I was doing a track here, a track there, kind of experimenting, a kid in a candy shop."

Matt Johnson (of future The The fame) became tea boy after Colin. They started making records as The Gadgets with fellow De Wolfe friend John Hyde. In fact, *Toy Box* closer, 'UFO Report No 1', about lovers in a graveyard who become UFO witnesses, originally appeared on their '80 *Gadgetree* album. "I remember hiding behind the gravestones as a schoolboy, trying to see what was going on," says Colin. "But I could never resist putting a darker element in, hence the landing of the spaceship."

The titular opening track is similarly twisted. "The kid with the toy box has discovered that if he licks the paint, he gets high," he notions. "It sounds all wonderfully innocent, but no, he is discovering new things." Colin also used his own experiences of drugs in the writing of the songs. "Once you've done that tripping thing, you can tap back into it and it opens up that perception that you didn't perhaps have before."

Elsewhere we meet little boys and girls, school moms, ice cream men, Native Americans, Pinocchio and wizards. But the children cry themselves to sleep, haunted by child molesters and arsonists. "If you were only half listening, it would sound like a nursery rhyme. But I wanted to give it another dimension once you go into it."

After the album had languished in a cupboard for two years, John Hyde suggested Colin should release it. "That's how it came out," he explains. "I had sort of forgotten about it. My first effort, maybe it wasn't good enough?" And when De Wolfe later wanted to reissue it, the master tapes could not be found. "The search is on. We have an idea where they might have ended up."

With its timeless pop sensibilities and DIY post-punk electronics approach, *Toy Box* is an album that perfectly captures the acid-punk creativity of the era. "Psychedelia is where my heart lies," concludes Colin.

Mr Tucker pauses for thought before opening his magical toy box for inspiration

get a buz

In My Roon

JON 'MOJO' MILLS explains the benefits of the **ROON** music management system

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Many thanks to Enno Vandermeer

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